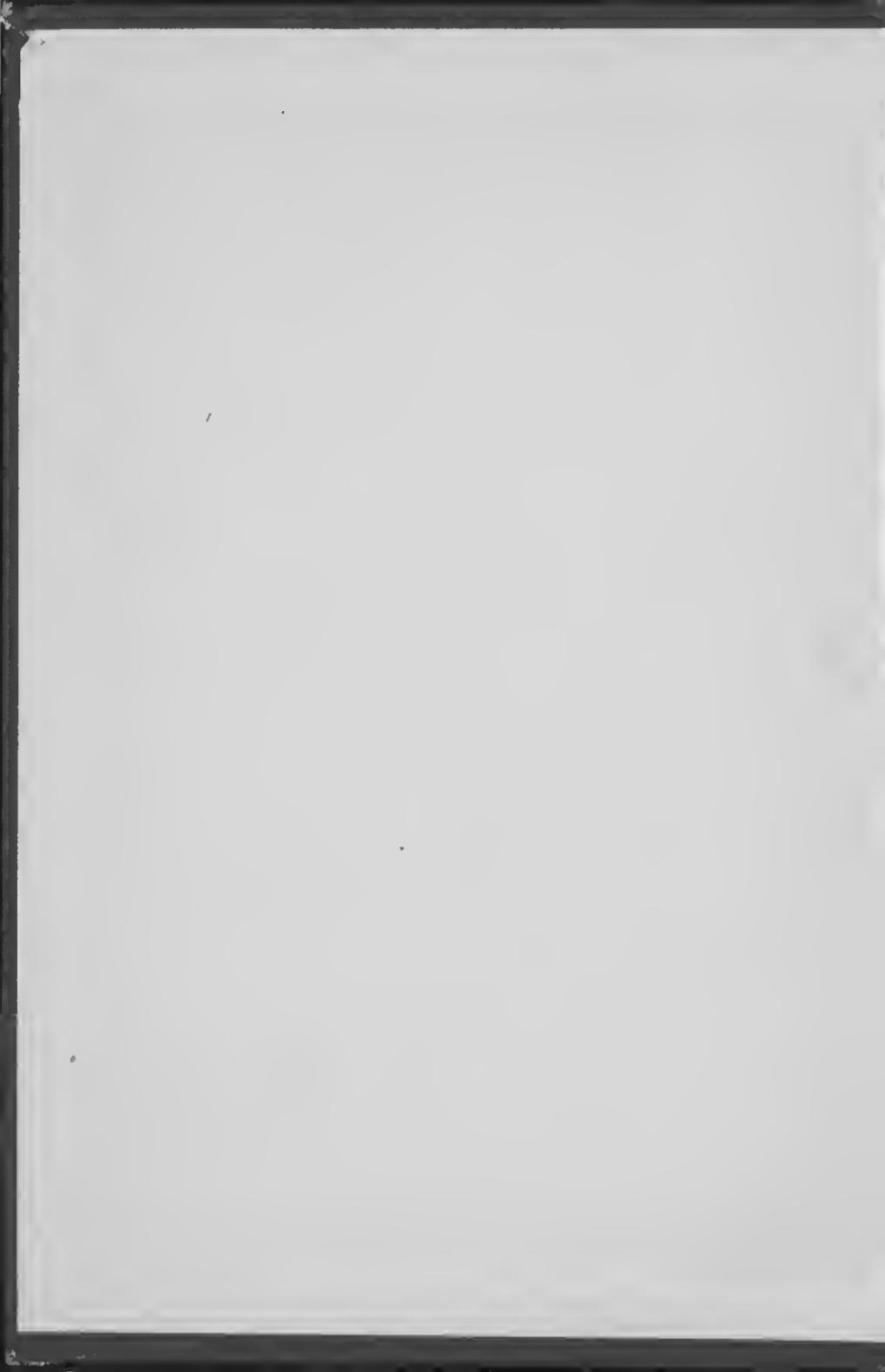


The Destiny of To-Day

STUDIES IN CONSCIENCE
AND CHARACTER



JOHN MACLEAN





THE DESTINY OF TO-DAY

Studies in Conscience and Character

BY

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TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS

MONTREAL: C. W. COATES HALIFAX: S. F. HUESTIS
1902

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THE DESTINY OF TO-DAY.

THE INVISIBLE THIRD.

“ Heaven is above all yet ; there sits a Judge
That no king can corrupt.” —*Shakespeare.*

“ God enters by a private door into every individual.”
—*Emerson.*

“ Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind
exceeding small ;
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exact-
ness grinds He all.” —*Friedrich Von Logan.*

“ Whither shall I flee from thy presence ?”—*Psa. 139 : 7.*

THE twofold problem which lies at the basis of all religions is, What is man? and What is God? Man is a revelation of God, a specimen of the handicraft of the Almighty, the thinker of the world, a son of God. Scientists have explored the secrets of his nature and written treatises upon his hand, foot, eye, circulation of the blood, and unanimous has been the verdict that he is fearfully and wonderfully made. Galen, the famous anatomist, by his dissections .

of the human frame, was compelled to acknowledge man as the work of a Supreme Being. The elements of fire and water are necessary to his existence, and yet they contain properties which will destroy him in a few moments. By the pores of his skin he inhales the powers of life, and they may be the means of death. The complexity of his mind, by which he holds the past, looks into the future, visits countries he has never seen with his eye, lives in communion with the immortals of bygone centuries, touches the lives of unborn generations, and becomes an heir of all nations, declares him the noblest of creation. The spirit which resides in man, bearing the likeness of the Infinite, by which he is a child of eternity, advancing in thought and feeling, strength and beauty, through all the ages, or capable of descending to a lower hell than even Danté or Milton could describe, marks him a being of unlimited possibilities, a little lower than the angels.

If man is so great, what is God? When man is beyond our comprehension, who shall describe the Infinite? No man has seen Him, and how then shall we paint His portrait? Shall we use the divine gift of imagination and describe Him? Then must we employ divine language—a speech unknown to man—to harmonize with the nature and character of Him who rules over

all. We cannot create Him as an artist creates a landscape he has never seen. We cannot depend upon chance, as a chemist may discover the properties of a chemical combination; so we must listen to Himself as He reveals Himself in the Scriptures, in Nature and in man. What is God? He is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, everywhere present, seeing all things at the same moment, more powerful than the combined armies of the living and dead of all ages, in heaven, earth and hell; so wise that He has never made a mistake; so good that hell acknowledges His justice and faithfulness; so free that He can never be limited in liberty; so true that an impure thought cannot enter His mind; so holy that if sinful man were to gaze upon Him he could not live; and so full of love that even hell is the expression of His emotions toward the worst of sinners.

There is an Invisible Third Person in the world. There is the presence of God's glory in heaven, of His power on earth, of His justice in hell, and of His grace in His people. God is not an absentee ruler, who has not visited the bounds of His empire, but a present friend, father and judge, who knows the meanest of His subjects and the vilest of rebels. Over the door of his library Linnæus placed the inscription, "Live innocently: God is present." Festus

says Christ is dead, Paul says He is alive, and the difference between these statements means the difference between heaven and hell. Every sinful thought, word and deed ; every sinful era or movement in social or political life ; every immoral book, error and superstition comes from the belief that Christ is dead ; and every noble life, true thought, word and deed, and advancement of truth and holiness in the nation, Church and individual, in science, art and literature, flows from the belief that Christ is alive. God is not dead. A belief in the omnipresence of God has been the mainspring of civilization. From the beginning human thought has been haunted by the presence of God. We are in touch with the Invisible. He is more real than our dearest companion. The visible things are shadowy-time things which must pass away, but the unseen is permanent and eternal. The invisible forces in the world and in man are persistent and will be dominant. We cannot see the invisible forces of thought, passion, memory and imagination in the person nearest to us. God can touch human hearts so faintly that we alone can tell, yet He holds the world so firmly that a bird's nest will not fall to the ground. God is here. God is real. God is personal to every man.

The presence of God as a source of comfort is

the special privilege of His people. The solitude of the soul is banished by a perfectly intimate presence, a society and communion which imparts life and joy, and may continue in perpetuity. Intimate communion with God drives away the solitude of the soul and invests us, like Moses, with a celestial radiance. It is the special privilege of those who live in communion with God to enjoy His presence. The consciousness of the nearness of the Eternal imparts strength for the greatest trials. We cry out for visions and discover, when our eyes are opened, that

“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God.”

Man is never neglected by Deity. The Unseen walks with man like a strong father holding us by the hand lest we fall, and with the tenderness of a mother He soothes our fears and gives us comfort. There is strength in knowing that God sees every sin. We are afraid to open our hearts to men lest we might lose their love by what they would see of impurity therein; but God sees every sin, and yet He loves us. Amazing love! blessed condescension! He does not forget us though He has many children. His large family is not neglected, and His love is not showered upon a few. He is

so near that He can see the most insignificant service done for Him, and He will not fail to recognize it with legitimate compensation. We need to be kept constant to the righteous cause of the eternal by the voice of the Master when our hearts are disappointed in expectation of applause and we are tempted to speak of our sacrifices for God. The Invisible is present and sees the faithful performance of duty unseen by men. The kind word—the real gift, poor in worldly estimation, but costly in the language of the heart—the patient endurance, the silent tears, the unspoken prayers, are all acknowledged by Him who alone is the spectator. Your limited sphere may seem to give little scope for your talents, but your work fits into the plan of God. You are like a stone-mason, chiselling a single stone for a fine edifice, who knows nothing of the plan of the architect, yet he works on, and by and by that stone will find its place ; so your work will fit into its place in the redemption of the world. Our work may seem to us to be confused, lacking in beauty and strength, and out of harmony with the plan of God ; but this confusion may arise from our narrow vision, and will seem different in the sight of God, or may be due to an unknown intermixture of laws, and will become order and beauty when we rise to their comprehension. It

is like the glacier broken up by its passage over a ledge. At first the ice presents an appearance of utter confusion, but when you reach a position where the mechanical conditions of the glacier reveal themselves, you will learn that the confusion is due to the unknown intermixture of laws, and order and beauty are seen when we fully comprehend them. So is it in God's service. He sees all because he is present, and He rewards all because He is just.

The Invisible Third is always present in the world as a righteous judge. The echo of "Whither" is ever heard as it falls from men's lips when they are seeking to get away from God. Daily the cry is heard, "*Whither shall I flee?*" and the hills and dales send the echo through the world until it reaches the hearts of men, and then it goes on echoing from one heart to another until it has travelled round the world, reverberated throughout the deepest recesses of hell, and touched the very throne of God. There is a secret place in every man where Divinity alone is allowed to enter. This secret apartment has its occupants. Conscience sits enthroned watching the battle of man's appetites and passions, the struggle between right and wrong, the holy war of sin and holiness, and the adversary of man is an interested spectator, and God is there. This is one of the

greatest battles that has ever been fought, and men carry in their faces the effects of that dreadful struggle. The tragedies of sin have never been written. There have been parodies of iniquity and miniature pictures of sin, but a picture or book which will fully describe the life-struggles of a single soul has never been painted or composed. Greek sculpture has embodied the intense struggle of man with evil in the statue of the Laocoön; but if you would read the story of sin, go to Calvary and study the infinite significance of the sacrifice of the Son of God. Man is ever seeking to flee from himself. The nature of man is in such a moral condition that, being at enmity with God, he has a dislike to God coming near him. When a man commits sin he wants to get away from his fellow men and God, but he cannot get away from his conscience. He cannot throw a veil or place a partition between his conscience and himself. We try to forget God, and we cannot. Much in the visible world there is which we do not see—the infirm, sick and dying; the thoughts and passions of other men; and because God is out of sight He is in a sense out of mind, yet He comes into men's thoughts and troubles them. God is here though we see Him not. *Without God in the world!* What a world man must live in! What would the

world be without God? The stars would fall, the sun would cease to give forth light and heat, intense darkness would envelop the globe, the earth would fail to bear fruit and foliage for man and beast, the seasons and tides would cease, and rank diseases would stalk through the land. It would be a world of disaster, unfit for man and beast to live, for the seas would leave their accustomed place, and without natural laws there would be chaos and death. Without God men would war against each other, for social and political life would be impossible. Men's passions would devour themselves, for the laws of mind would be destroyed. Peace, joy and immortal hope would be forever banished, for spiritual laws would not exist. What a world this would be if sin were sitting on the throne of God! What would it be if a Herod or Nero were to dethrone God and to preside over the destinies of eternity? The direful consequences we cannot describe, and the imagination of each must fill in the picture.

The Invisible is present in every place, and you cannot hide yourself from Him. Hide yourself in a cave, seek the recesses of the loftiest mountain—God is there. Fleeing from God; you run out of one place into another, yet you always run toward Him. Whither shall I flee? Whither? Whither? The echo of your

heart, voice and conscience keeps resounding, Whither? Whither? The conscience of Adam drove him behind the trees. The consciousness of what he was terrified him. Sinners ever try to hide themselves from God, but in vain. Jonah ran away from God, but not to escape. As we withdraw from God we are brought more powerfully into solitude with Him; and yet some men retire into solitude to devise and perpetrate crimes. The loneliness of the prairie begets thoughts of God. The Invisible is always present, and though you may descend into the lowest depths of earth, or seek the lonely retreats in the forest, you cannot hide yourself from His watchful eye. The criminal flees across the ocean to escape human justice, but divine justice is ever on his tracks. Your footprints are left on the air and the sea, and with unerring skill divine justice will drag you from your lonely haunt.

God is present in human affairs. The compass of the vision of God is immeasurable. To us there is an unknown part in every action—something we do not see. We leave one part unexplored to think upon another part. God sees every action on all its sides. Whilst we are judging partially with our limited vision, the Unseen is judging fully. Things do not appear the same to God and to us. Could we but see them as they appear to Him, our lives would be

different. A third person does not repeat the story told by you as you related it. His impressions are different, and the story changes by frequent repetitions until truth becomes falsehood. God does not see and judge things as you see them. There is an Invisible Third Person present at the making of every contract. You may deceive your fellows, there may be a legal flaw, a loophole by which you can have an advantage, but as you sign your name this Invisible Third Person is looking over your shoulder, and there is no escape from the consequences of your sin. You may cheat man, but God cannot be cheated. The writing has found a negative on your heart and will be revealed in eternity to your disgrace. The Unseen is present at every transaction. We cannot engage in any transaction alone. There is never a solitary act, word or thought. Burn up the writing, it will live in the air; tear up the letter, conscience and memory will weave it together. The Master of men always appears uninvited, because He is Master. There is no solitude on earth. Man is never alone. Every transaction is seen. Every man is writing his own biography. It is interesting, eternal and terrible. Each page is finished daily and God is reading it. Such a book was never printed except by the types of eternity. The deed performed in darkness be-

comes visible and permanent. The Unseen is present in every company, listening to every conversation. You long for affection—something to love, an interested friend to associate and commune with, while God offers His friendship and communion and is refused or forgotten. We are masters of the unsaid word and slaves of the spoken one. A Silent Spectator waits in every company, an Uninvited Guest. Not a word is spoken, not a look exchanged, not a passion felt, but He hears and sees. We would not care to have some persons present lest they would spoil our pleasures, yet God is there. He is a silent listener, though sometimes He and conscience talk together. A dozen prayers will not outweigh an angry word or unkind sentence. The unchristian word goes speeding on its mission of injury, while none but the Father hears the penitent prayer. He may forgive the sinful speech, but He does not hinder its evil effects. The Invisible is present in every home. Night and day there is a Divine Guest lodging with us. There is no need of a reserved apartment for Him. He sits at the table, follows us from room to room, keeps watch over us through the darkness of the night, and is never absent. The sick and dying have need of His presence, and the living would fain sometimes that He would depart. Bars and bolts shut Him not out, and

neglect will not banish Him. He abides to protect and comfort, to warn and reprove. There is not a home, be it ever so humble, where He does not dwell, and no palace so sinful that He will not stay.

The Unseen is present in every individual life. Every man is a creature of God, who never gives up His claim upon the workmanship of His hands. His angels guard the footsteps of His children lest they stumble over the precipice. God is present with every man. Imagine the expression of His countenance when a man, made in His image, forgets his dignity and relationship and commits a sin. An earthly parent cries in agony while his heart is breaking, and his hair turns white because his son or daughter goes astray from his teaching, and what shall be the anxiety of Infinite Love when one of His children persists in wrong-doing? The Invisible is present at the committal of every crime, every act of folly, every sinful pleasure. He is looking on at every task. As a man is working at his daily task, absorbed with its importance and unseen by men, there is a constant Spectator giving him encouragement for his faithfulness, or reproving him for his shortsightedness and folly in belittling his work. Every man is engaged in an eternal mission, and the material

labor has permanent elements which can never pass away. Man's work is eternal. The Employer of man is inspecting his work every moment. Not a flaw escapes His notice. No imperfection is passed by. This is encouragement for the patient worker unknown to the world; but it means despair to him who is scant in service and unfaithful to his task. When Phidias, the famous sculptor, had finished his reclining statue of Theseus, it was observed that, though it was to occupy an elevated position in the temple, the back of the statue was as highly polished as the front; and when asked why he had expended so much time and energy upon that part which would never be seen by men, he calmly and reverently replied, "Men may not see it, but the gods will." The eye of God sees the inmost thoughts, motives and desires, as well as their outward expression. Nothing escapes the vigilance of the righteous Judge.

God is always keeping a record of every life to its minutest details. Darkness is light to God. The darkest night is an unerring photographer of every action. There is scientific probability that, however deep the darkness, every act is imprinted on nature, and there may be tests which shall draw it into daylight and make it permanent. The prints of the feet of

birds have been left on the rocks ; the ichthysaurus has spoken ages after it had ceased to exist ; the fossil remains of animals and men are revealings of past history. They left their marks that future ages might read. The Recorder of the Universe is always taking notes. There is a record of every act, word and thought. These imprint themselves on the history of the world, on the minds and memories of men, and on our own natures. This record will be read. It will not be hidden away to remain musty for ages, but will retain its freshness till the judgment day. The Unseen is watching every man. The eye of God is upon us. "Thou God seest me." We shut our eyes and hang down our heads, yet we feel the terrible pressure upon our hearts that some One is looking at us. The prisoner in the condemned cell shrinks from the eye that is fixed upon him through the small opening in the door, and there is oppression to the sinner in the constant and fixed gaze of the eye of the Eternal Judge.

Beware, then, of sin, and flee from it. It will slay you if you run not from it toward God. Its allurements entice you that it may destroy. There is no safety in a life of unrighteousness. Flee from Sodom to Calvary. Escape for thy life and look not behind thee. Seek God and

make Him your friend, and you shall find peace and joy. His voice will lose its harshness. Denunciation of your sins will be changed into the accents of forgiveness; and when you fall at His feet as an humble penitent, He will bless you with peace beyond all price.

THE EVERY DAY OF JUDGMENT.

“ Is there but one day of judgment? Why, for us every day is a day of judgment—every day is a *dies iræ*, and writes its irrevocable verdict in the flame of its west.”—*John Ruskin.*

“ Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.”—*1 Tim. 5:24.*

THE world is built on eternal justice. Judgment is its foundation. The purple-clothed sinner may drive the righteous poor from his door, but the world expects he must settle the account at no distant date. The recognition of judgment of thoughts, words and deeds lies deep in the soul of man. There is no escape from the first judgment, as there will not be from the last. Duplicity will be outwitted and blasphemy will be crushed. Conscience says right will prevail and wrong will be punished. The fire of lust will burn itself. The vicious man is always minus something; the virtuous man is always plus something. The balances of justice are so finely adjusted in nature that there is no good or evil so small that the scales will not be turned. Men look for this in human affairs and expect it in themselves, though sin

may dull their sense and cause them at times to forget it. Justice is well represented as blind-folded, that there may be no partiality and every one may get his due. Human justice is so often thwarted through ignorance, self-interest, deliberate and determined iniquity, that the world often seems out of gear, and the best of men suffer. The good are persecuted and vilified, the bad exalted and admired. Neros sit on thrones and Polycards are destroyed. Laud is an archbishop, and Richard Cameron, the godly Covenanter, is beheaded. In the hearts of men there is a demand for a day of settlement, when wrongs will be righted and the virtuous and wicked alike receive their due.

The adjustment of the affairs of the world is seen in the doom of nations, exalted in privilege and opportunity, and cast down and obliterated through iniquity. The doom of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, is repeated in the history of nations till the present time. The fire of sensuality consumes them, and the lava of atheism will bury them from the inemory of future generations. Every man is subject to similar conditions and consequences. Individuals will be judged, and from the sentence there is no escape. There is a judgment of wrath or of righteousness for every man. Future judgment is recognized by men, and the Scrip-

tures very fully describe the scene, the actors, the sentences and their fulfilment.

Condemnation and acquittal are not limited to the future, for there is present judgment as well as future. To-morrow is the judgment and so is to-day. What would the world be without a judgment day? Superstition might flee before the advance of culture, but passion would chase reason out of the world, anarchy would stalk in ribald majesty through the streets, compelling virtue to hide her face, religion and religious institutions and influences would be banished, and God would be dethroned. Should there ever come a day of no judgment, the world would sit in darkness as deep as the lowest hell, the flowers would forget to bloom and send out their fragrance, the birds would forget to sing, and nature without laws would fall into infinite disorder. What would a single man be without a judgment day? It would produce in him such a revolution that the beasts of the field would be heroes and kings and usurp his authority, for he would cease to be a man, and the lowest creatures would be gods compared to him. We speak of the last judgment, and stand entranced before the masterpiece of the great painter who reveals his idea of that impressive scene; but if there is a last judgment, there must be a first.

We are each living in the first judgment. Unto each of us there are many judgment days, for each day is a judgment day. The present judgment is as true, real and permanent as the future judgment.

When a deed is done it is photographed in nature and in the memory of man, and cannot be changed. It is recorded and judged. The thoughts become visible, the words find permanence in ourselves and others, and the deeds are transformed from things of time into eternal things. Consequences follow them as fruit from trees. The spoken word cannot be recalled, forgotten, or destroyed. It has gone out into the universe on its mission of good or evil, and will return to us as a messenger with his story or a warrior with his spoils. Every act is related to other acts. Sin never travels alone. It seeks company, and is fruitful. It is a weed of the rankest kind, which usurps the soil and destroys our choicest pleasures. There is so much in sin that is never disclosed, as it possesses the power of attractiveness, and the dark company go trooping through the world in their work of despair. We cannot see the effects of their destructive mission except here and there the blackened trail, and we need the light of the judgment day to reveal the mystery and settle the account. Every word, thought, motive and

act is recognized by God, and has present judgment. He decides the question of merit or demerit, discriminating between the good and bad in their relation to privilege, opportunity and circumstances. Seeing all things, He settles all things in this present life, with a reservation of power in the mystery of justice in the future.

Every day is a day of judgment. Is there but one judgment day, or are we living in the midst of judgment, and every day a day of judgment? We are standing to-day before the throne of God, and the Judge of all the earth is dividing the sheep and the goats, and Christ is now separating those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, from those who are contentious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness. You are in your judgment day, and one step may take you over the border to the final judgment. The world is a court of justice, and our fellow men sit in judgment upon us. With a keener insight and truer judgment than was possible through the aid of the ordeals of the middle ages, by which men were tested by fire, our follies, frailties and sins are discovered. In the tribunal of the world every man is found out, and worth receives a measure of its due. Every action is gauged and stamped. We pretend to be great to-day, and a word, movement,

mode of dress, or expression of countenance, puts us in our true place. There is a divine questioning in the hearts of men regarding each other as to their fitness, and saint and sinner find their level. The heathen sit in judgment upon us, as they contrast our creed and character. Satan is not an uninterested spectator of the ways of men. Sinners place their estimate on Christians by their hatred of the weakness of our faith in God and things invisible, and the distance which lies between Christ and our likeness to Him. Our homes and our pleasures become our graves, the animals we abuse and the insects we crush become our judges, and before the light of eternity has dawned upon us we are condemned in the sight of God and man. What if the dying and the dead as they leave this world are able to pierce our garments of flesh and look into our souls and read the history which no living man can see ! What a tale is there written ! If they possess the power of telling what they saw when they reach the outskirts of the kingdom, to those who wait their coming, what a sad message they will bear ! It will be enough to darken the atmosphere of heaven and hide the face of God.

God is not silent in the affairs of the world, though He is longsuffering and seems to indulge us in our sins and deal mercifully with us. He

finds no delight in smiting, yet in justice He smites the sinner. Righteousness is the master-word of the Old Testament. Judgment, in law, is not the sentence of the judge, but of the law; judgment, in theology, is a divine sentence, the expression of God, who is the Maker of the law. There is no escape from eternal justice. The stamp of justice is left upon the body and mind of the drunkard and criminal. Our brother's blood writes its message upon our hearts. The burden of iniquity crushes our life. The Cross is a judge of all. The day of the Cross was a mighty judgment day. There is a law of infinite mercy on earth, and a law of infinite rigor. Justice, duty and love can only be grounded in the Eternal. Wherever sin is punished, God is not slow to assert His sovereign connection with the process. We cannot disassociate God from the terrible and enduring pains which alight upon all forms of sin. The sunset chronicles the events which have occurred during the day. The waves that beat against Venice sing the dirge of her downfall from the days of her glory.

Every day is a day of wrath to the sinner. Sin is self-chastised. There is an inwardness of penalty from which we cannot flee when we have committed sin. Sin leaves its tooth-mark in the flesh. It punishes itself, sees its shadow everywhere, a diseased and distressing self-con-

temptation, having its birth in egotism and its fruit in madness. Unresting remorse is one of the fiends of the judgment day. Remorse and fated moods of introspection are the appointed penalties of sin. We stand self-condemned when we sit in judgment upon ourselves. There is no night so dark but fancy and memory will bring before us scenes of other days which seem to us gratuitous falsehood until conscience condemns us as the perpetrators of these deeds. Sigurd the Bold, vowing loyalty to the Cross, forgets his vow in the midnight revels of his palace, and an aged monk reminds him of the great decree that man shall not live by bread alone. The divine thirst of the soul cannot be quenched by sensual pleasure. "Show me the place," cries the monarch, and with his sword the scroll is rent; but the fearless monk, holding in his hand the severed scroll, gleaming as the roll of the judgment day, boldly says, "Still it is written on thy soul." Human character publishes itself; actions speak louder than words; our silence speaks aloud and our faces tell no lies. In the solitudes of nature the existence of hell is declared by a thousand spiritual utterances. The moaning of the winds, the blasted trunk, the barren rock, and the dark solitudes of mountain, prairie and seas, tell us of evil succeeding good and night the day. We write

our history with our blood. As suddenly and mysterious as the handwriting on the wall at the feast of Belshazzar does sin leave its hieroglyphics on the soul, and there is no need of an interpreter to disclose the full meaning of the characters. It is the manuscript of God. The most beautiful arts are the expression of people who feel themselves wrong, ever striving after a loveliness they have not yet attained. The Book of Remembrance is ever in view ; a sense of judgment is in the air ; self-judgment is mysteriously forced upon us by an unseen hand ; sensual passion begets madness ; man, made in the image of God falling into sin and delighting in it, becomes finally degraded, and a sense of shame and baseness completes the human tragedy. Instruments of judgment all lie ready to hand ; the inward processes of sin work destructively on man's body, mind and soul ; there are red beacons everywhere warning men of inward and outward sin.

We are living in eternity to-day. To-day is a new day, and we must live in the moment, advancing as the shadow on the dial. You cannot escape eternity by forgetting it ; you may try to flee from present judgment and eternal justice, but there is no escape—God can and does strike now. He is not obliged to send a sinner to the place of the damned in order to

punish him; He is the Judge to-day. Cain was allowed to live as a warning to others of the direful effects of giving way to malignant passions, and as a living monument of the power of a guilty conscience. His wild ferocity of aspect made every one shrink from him. Our life is one. It is a continuous, irretraceable life, which we cannot recall or live over again, and in a truer sense than Pilate meant must each of us say, "What I have written I have written." How often we say, "Oh, if I could only live my life over again!" But the door of that "if" is closed and the key is thrown away. Steadily our life moves onward, and there is no retreat. Around the dial of a clock in a church tower in Spain, runs the legend, "All the moments wound, the last one slays." The longest life comes to an end, yet we are dying every day. Eternity is upon us, and we change not the actions of to-day by acts or penances of the future.

The higher judgment day is a repetition of the every day of judgment, with fuller disclosures and a final emphasis. The final day will disclose the hidden things of this life. In Hawthorne's narrative, "The Minister's Black Veil," a godly and intelligent minister suddenly appears in his pulpit wearing a double fold of cràpe over his face, to the horror and surprise

of his congregation. He has resolved to wear it to the end of life as a sign of the reservations with which men hide their faults from each other, and their attempt to disguise and hide the worst that is in them from God Himself. This singular badge looks as a penance for some scandalous sin, and no one dares to ask him its meaning. The lady who was to be his bride could not persuade him to remove it, and she bids him farewell. On his deathbed a neighboring minister seeks to extort a confession for his secret sin, and remove the badge; but the dying minister clutches at it, and he is buried with the veil unlifted. It remains as a witness that much which eternity will disclose to us cannot be revealed in this life by those who are nearest to us. We live a double life—one known to ourselves and another for our fellow men—but God sees both of them. God can wait to strike, for He has a whole eternity before Him. The present judgment is preliminary to the higher and final judgment day. At a chemical lecture in Paris, the effects of the gases upon the faces of most of the women in the fashionable audience who used cosmetics to improve the complexion, transformed them into such ludicrous colors that when they met in the open air they greeted one another with exclamations of dismay. Is not this suggestive of the transfor-

mation of the judgment, when every man will stand convicted of his sin? What shall there be in the other world for us?

Perform, then, such acts as will not be condemned. "Will my case be called to-day?" is the earnest inquiry of the prisoner of his legal adviser. "Have you left nothing undone?" is the appeal of his anxious mind. Such anxiety in relation to a civil court on earth ought to suggest greater anxiety in relation to the high court of eternity. It is impossible for you to stand acquitted in your own strength. To-day you are being judged, and yet you do not tremble. The Judge is at the doors of your houses, condemning you for your sins. The Advocate waits at your side to plead for you; He claims you for his client; He has the wisdom and ability to set you at liberty. Will you let Him?

REMORSE.

“ Conscience is harder than our enemies,
Knows more, accuses with more nicety.”

—*George Eliot.*

“ ‘Tis the first constant punishment of sin,
That no bad man absolves himself within.”

—*Juvenal.*

“ My punishment is greater than I can bear.”—*Gen. 4: 13.*

CAIN and Judas are representatives of the class of individuals afflicted with remorse of conscience. They are striking illustrations of the fact that there is in man a revelation of the divine will, called conscience. Man is a fellow-knower, in association with God, knowing right and wrong. The part of the divine likeness in these typical sinners reproved them for their sin. The voice of God, the eye that approves and condemns, will not leave us alone. Man walks not alone in the world, for conscience has possession of each one and will not let him go. The self-registering thermometer in the soul tells its own tale and reveals to each his native condition, unseen by mortal eyes. God has placed in each of us a judge of moral thoughts

and actions, to discriminate and decide, a power which is above us, that, being mindful of eternal justice, we may have a perpetual witness of God and His will in the soul. This judge approves of what is right and condemns that which is wrong. Conscience doth make cowards of us all. Joseph's brethren thought of the crime they had committed against him years before in selling him before he revealed himself to them in Egypt. The voice within often awakens unpleasant remembrances of sins hidden from all but ourselves. Yet this inward power may be enlightened or depraved. Men live amongst us with consciences refined and diseased, silenced temporarily. This power can never be generated, eradicated, nor definitely perverted. It will speak out for God and righteousness, though we may strive to hush it to sleep.

There is need for such a divine witness in man to keep the knowledge of God pure and strong in the soul, to develop righteousness and form right habits of conduct. The glorious liberty of haters of God is to get rid of the bugbear of righteousness and the rule of the imaginary individual named God, having their fruit unto the gratification of their passions. It is needed to make the most of ourselves by a Godlike aim, bearing in mind the purpose for which we were created. Michael Angelo pos-

sessed the power to take the angel out of the block of marble, but whether it should be a satyr or a seraph lay in the direction which he gave to that power; and conscience is required to give the direction to our thoughts and life. It is needed to make life vivid. The power of the world to come must rest upon us to infuse the feeling of eternity in our souls. We are apt to live as if there were no judgment and man was not responsible for his thoughts, words and deeds. It makes all the difference in our lives whether we are living and working in or out of harmony with God. To chop a tree upward is hard, but the downward swing has in it all the force of the earth itself; and to work against God is hard, while working with Him has the long purpose of eternity behind and success ahead. It is needed to establish and maintain proper relations between ourselves and our fellows. To gaze upon the follies of men is to indulge in outside laughter while within our hearts are sad. Conscience is needed to give life a long outlook and brighten eternity. Temptations, doubts and difficulties will beset us, yet the true Christian heart can say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." The darkened vision may come to the devoted spirit, and then he will need the divine testimony assuring his soul that all is well. The assurance of sal-

vation will lighten the gloom on the pathway of life. The blatant blasphemy of the age receives a check in the pathetic lines engraved on the tombstone of Thomas Henry Huxley :

“ And if there be no meeting past the grave,
If all is darkness, silence, yet 'tis rest.
Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,
For God still giveth His beloved sleep ;
And if an endless sleep He wills—so best.”

A positive life is the need of the individual. Men cannot live on stones. Some of the most pathetic utterances have been given by men who lived on a negative creed, which is the creed of death. Conscience is the need of the world. The conscience of the race is often true, yet it requires training. Public opinion is often confused and lacking in fixed moral principles. The age is wanting in the recognition of the fact that God rules in the world, that eternal justice is the foundation of His government. Anarchy cannot stand before a firm belief in the Almighty and Supreme God, for this makes a government firm. Weak, wavering consciences need the common conscience to sting and stimulate them. How often we have seen men away from home living vicious lives, who are respectable and virtuous among their friends in their native city. Leave God and conscience out of the world and there is no re-

morse; let materialism have the supremacy and a keen sense of sin will be absent.

There is punishment inherent in evil. God has placed a monitor in the soul of man to protect him against evil. The approval of conscience is a religious appetite, and its stings religious aversion. Sin and punishment were synonymous with Cain, the typical sinner. Perversity, iniquity, sin and punishment are proper translations of the same Hebrew word. Punishment inheres in the sin. The voice of God in the soul protects it from injurious influences if we will only listen and obey. There is always a good angel standing by our side to warn us against the temptations and dangers of sin. The Father watches over his children with more than the anxiety of a mother. Punishment in the sense of discipline is the expression of love. Drooping eyes, colored cheeks, and a sense of shame are proofs of the existence of righteousness in the soul. The man is not dead who experiences these things; he is not wholly lost. The blatant criminal who sins and looks you in the face is standing on the brink of hell. Man is built up around a conscience, and the core of every one's being is a moral substance.

Each emotion, thought, word and act finds a place in the memory, and will strike back. These are deeply imbedded in the memory

and, as photographers' negatives, are preserved. There is an eternal phonograph which will give expression to the thoughts, words and acts of every life; it will retain all we have spoken into it, and when eternity dawns upon our vision it will give utterance to our unspoken thoughts. Turquoise may be stained an exceptionally fine blue color, so as to deceive the eye of the expert; but wash it in alcohol, wipe off the grease, and lay it in ammonia, and the true nature of the stone will be revealed. Deception will always be discovered. Evil will always strike back. Memory restores old forms. The snatch of an old song, the tint of a flower, an old glove, or a face in a crowd, will bring forms and faces of other days, and a new experience or chance acquaintance will restore the evil words, thoughts and acts of former years. Imagination begets new forms. When the imagination is pure and refined it produces lovely pictures, and upon us, therefore, lies the responsibility of seeking the culture of the imagination by the study of great books, works of art, and communion with godlike men and women. Sin affects the imagination. It begets fear. Spectres fill the air. Spiritual *delirium tremens* affect the victim of sin. The lawless, vindictive Cain felt that there might be other beings like himself who would deal with him

as he had done with his brother. His imagination was powerfully wrought upon by his crime. So is it always. In the "Eumenides" of Eschylus, Orestes sees the Furies always pursuing him. Sin arouses the conscience to cry out and the man feels an inward curse gnawing his vitals. In one of Hawthorne's stories a wretched man is represented as carrying about in his bosom a serpent which gnaws him continually, and he thinks every man he meets is cursed with the same snaky guest. He is a victim of remorse. Remorse is literally an after-bite—a keen anguish caused by a sense of guilt without any suggestion of forgiveness. Sin always bites back; you cannot get away from the consequences of sin. It has a voice and will speak out despite our strongest protestations. Shut your ears and it will thunder as loud as Sinai in your hearts. Fill up all the avenues of sense, and it will find a road to your hearts; night and day are alike to this voice.

Every immoral thing will consign man on earth to a living death. Sin is a deadly poison, which slays man by inches. The sinner walks through the world restless as the wandering Jew, doomed to wander and never rest till Christ shall come. Every impure act dooms man to ceaseless activity, ever hastening and never resting. A French writer has represented Herodias

doomed to wander for centuries for her crime of seeking the head of John the Baptist. Ever behind her as she wanders she hears the cry, "Go on, go on." In her weary wanderings, desiring death and anxious to grow old, while she still remains young, she comes to a ruined abbey in a secluded glen in Europe, where there stands in front a statue of John the Baptist, headless, holding his head in a platter. She sees in the face a look of sympathy and pity, and as she looks into a spring at her side she perceives her hair turning white and she is rapidly growing old, and her longed-for rest of death has come at last. It is the old story of remorse for sin. The hateful thing will not leave you nor let you die. You long for death, but there is no happy release. You try to escape, but the way is barred. You cry in agony, but the heavens mock you.

Every thought, word and deed of sin strikes at the image of Christ in the soul. Christ has conferred benefits upon every member of the human race. The germ of divine goodness in the soul becomes diseased by sinful thoughts and deeds; the Christ image in the soul becomes partially defaced by it, and man loses his dignity and beauty through its presence. A strange power presses the offending soul to stern and awful acts of self-judgment. The

impure thought casts a shadow over the mind, the hasty word cuts deep into the memory, and the sinful deed leaves a scar upon the soul. The vision becomes distorted and the imagination diseased. Eugene Aram, the schoolmaster, murders a man, and he cannot look in the faces of the innocent children. He buries the body, but he has to take it up; he hides it in a stream, but it runs dry; he covers it with leaves, but the winds blow them away. Nature and God are against him, and his conscience always smites.

Neglect of duties and opportunities cannot be atoned for by man. Every day may be the last one, and lost time is lost eternity. Man cannot get rid of his sin. The hours perish and are put down to our account. The lost opportunity never returns. Evil done is done forever. It leaves its mark upon us which we carry forever. We cannot atone for past misdeeds. Remorse of conscience is part of the punishment of sin on earth. Remorse is the fitting word for the punishment of sin. Commit a crime and its effects remain, it returns to smite the sinner. Conceive a man living in hell on earth, tracing for others a road to heaven from which his crimes exclude him. Conceive a soul preparing joys for others, and compelled to witness the pleasure which he cannot enjoy

The stain of blood cannot be rubbed out. Go to Holyrood Palace and see the mark left by the blood of Rizzio. Lady Macbeth may wash her hands, but "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." Poe's raven pecks at your window, looks over your shoulder, burns into your bosom's core with his fiery eyes, and always you hear the grim and ancient raven croaking, "Nevermore." There is such a thing as eternal remorse, the worm that dieth not, the sin that will never let us rest, but forever cries out against us.

Each feeling, thought, word and act is reproductive. Like begets like. Character grows and determines destiny ; it shows itself in all we do. Habits are made easily, but we are flayed alive when we seek to strip them off. Kindness never dies, and there is something of evil that ever remains. Physical forces cannot originate, except by generation, from some antecedent force or forces. Heat may produce electricity and electricity heat, each merging itself as the force it produces becomes developed, so there is a correlation of spiritual forces. Love begets peace and peace begets love ; joy produces faith and faith produces joy ; evil begets evil, and the habit of vice begets vice. The wistaria throws out its tendrils so tenderly that it pleads for support, and you build a trellis

that it may entwine itself; but by and by it becomes so strong that the tendrils pull the posts aside, and may even move the solid brick—so is a vicious habit, easily begun, growing stronger with the years, until it destroys the reputation and undermines the character. Some poisons may be taken little by little with impunity, but they make a cumulative deposit, which at last acts as a final dose, and sin reaches a climax by repetition until it destroys the sinner. Danté places the tyrants who delighted in bloodshed and pillaging up to the eyebrows in boiling blood wherein they uttered loud laments to no purpose. Habitual sins mark character. Tennyson forcefully says:

“The sin that practice burns into the blood,
And not the one dark hour that brings remorse,
'Twill brand us of whose fold we be.”

Evil is expansive, increasing with age. Sin grows. There is a silent progress of decadence. An avalanche grows from the soft snow which you press in your hand, till it gathers hardness and force and plunges headlong, carrying destruction along its path. A sin in its infancy is like a fire that a single bucket of water may at first quench, but afterward fire engines cannot put out. The miser's love of wealth increases until it crushes him. Faust is greedy

of knowledge, and while he gains it, is conscious of its emptiness. His passion for knowledge drives him on, ever greedier for its possession and less satisfied the more he gets. The tempter mocks the harmony of heaven and mars the beauty of earth, plays upon the lower nature of the man, corrupting his intellect by the lowest of his senses, and as he weans him from the high pursuit of truth to the lust of the flesh, he does it at the expense of chastity and beauty, glorying ever in the waste which he creates. There are steps in evil thinking and doing. The descent to hell has steps as well as the ascent to heaven. There are stages in sin as well as in holiness. There is a voluntary as well as involuntary hardening of the heart. You may tune a violin to keep step with the vibrations of a suspension bridge in course of erection so that it will sway to destruction, and men may tune their passions to the vibrations of iniquity till the structure made by God will fall in ruins. We multiply ourselves in our sins.

"Foul whisperings are abroad; unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles; infected minds to their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets." Punishment grows with the sin until the moral nature is destroyed and all feeling is gone. There is misery in the sense of sin. The sharpest woe is to look on the ills we have

brought upon ourselves. Vice begets loneliness. Lost souls as they sink in vice become isolated, estranged from their fellows and God. The soul of Richard III. is so roused with the thought of his wickedness that conscience has a thousand tongues, every tongue tells a different tale, and every tale condemns him for a villain. He thinks the souls of all he murdered come to his tent with threats of vengeance on his head. Shadows become stronger than soldiers. Punishment grows with the years, though conscience may seem dead it will cry out. This is seen in conscience money, confessions upon death-beds of crimes committed, and men fleeing from the faces of their fellows.

Remorse of conscience is certain. It is sure to come to the sinner. Be sure your sin will find you out. The pleasures of sin are like the fabled apples on the brink of the Dead Sea, fair without, but ashes within. Vice will destroy the sinner. It will return like the Australian boomerang, and may destroy the thrower. God inflicts His penalties upon the unrighteous. The way of transgressors is hard. It is hard to indulge in sensual sin, for you cannot escape the consequences. Remorse will come. If you live in dissipation or forget God, though your sin may be hidden from man, remorse is sure to follow the sin. A terrible anguish will eat at

the core of the heart and will not be satisfied. Would you know what remorse is, visit the deathbed of Randolph of Roanoke. Having made preparations to die, he lay quiet for a short time with his eyes closed, and then suddenly roused up and exclaimed, "*Remorse! Remorse!*" Having repeated it three times, the last time at the top of his voice, with great agitation he cried out, "Let me see the word—get a dictionary! Let me see the word!"

"There's none in the room, sir."

"Write it down, then. Let me see the word!"

The doctor picked up one of his cards, "Randolph, of Roanoke." "Shall I write on this?"

"Yes; nothing more proper."

The word *remorse* was then written in pencil. Taking the card in a hurried manner, and fastening his eyes on it with great intensity, he exclaimed, "Write it on the back." When this was done, it was handed to him. With great agitation he exclaimed, "*Remorse!* You have no idea what it is; you can form no idea of it whatever; it has contributed to bring me to my present situation. But I have looked to the Lord Jesus Christ, and hope I have obtained pardon. Now let John take your pencil and draw a line under the word."

When this was done, the doctor asked, "What am I to do with the card?"

"Put it in your pocket, take care of it, and when I am dead, look at it."

Remorse of conscience will come to the sinner. Look into your heart and see there the foul thoughts and impure desires. Have you any thought of pleasing God? The infinite searcher of hearts will send a flash more powerful than the electric light into the darkness of your soul, revealing His foes and condemning them for their iniquity. Well may you become weepers, like the followers of Savonarola, because of your sins. Tamper not with evil, or it will slay you. Flee from God by fleeing to Him. Repent of your sins, and depart from the City of Destruction, for the place is doomed. Conscience bids you halt, for an angel of light stands ready to save you. Beware of the hidden currents of your life. Conviction is worthless until converted into conduct. Weep for your sins and flee from them. Seek power from Christ to overcome sin, and the tear of infinite pity will quench the flame of sinful desire, the sunshine of hope will enter your soul, and love—divine love—will transform, ennoble and save you.

RETRIBUTION.

“ To be left alone
And face to face with my own crimes, had been
Just retribution.”

—*Longfellow.*

“ Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.”

—*Shakespeare.*

“ Be sure your sin will find you out.”—*Num. 32: 23.*

MAN is religious in spite of himself. The faiths of the human heart are a stern witness against sin in every form, and assert the eternal distinction between right and wrong. Among all tribes and generations of men there exist the same principles and distinctions of moral good and evil. Vice may come armed with authority, and dressed in the garb of innocence, yet she is repelled by the moral instincts residing in the human heart. The continence of Xenocrates was admired by those who celebrated the debaucheries of Jupiter. The worst of men admire goodness. Adam, before the fall, felt the same passions as we do now, but he felt them as he

ought and when he ought. After the fall, though the same passions remained, their use and action were changed, so that self-love became selfishness, disorder reigned in the heart, and there was needed a new creation to make him a true child of God.

Our lives often appear different to other people than what they seem to us. As a vessel at sea may be seen in sunshine and shade by the people who stand on the shore, and the pilot is thinking of the dangers and breakers ahead, so we, battling with the waves, keep true to our course without asking how we look from the shore. What should we care how we appear if only we are right? The rule of right is not a provincialism of this planet, but is eternal and universal.

Let life be accurately represented, and there will always be found a theology in life. In all great religions there is found one God, personal immortality and retribution. There is a law of retribution which is restless, persistent, and a part of the permanent order of the world. There are processes which vindicate righteousness and outlive the generations of men. God is in the world asserting His existence and righteousness by laws which men are compelled to recognize. Obedience to these laws ensures peace, and disobedience brings disorder and death. God is

nearer to us than our own thoughts and feelings. The evil things in the universe cannot break the ring which God has made about us. He comes to make a home with us that no human being can enter. The eternal Father comes closer to us than the evil thought and temptation. There is a present retribution confined to ourselves in this earth-life. Sin will reveal itself to man, making him feel the presence of a monster seeking to destroy him. There is an internal discovery of sin. Sin will reveal man to himself, turning him inside out. What a discovery! The pain of wrong-doing may be lessened by repetition, as there will be less of the man to be hurt. Man becomes less a man by placing himself under the destructive power of sin. Remorse is a sign of life, for the man is not wholly dead who feels the soul-pangs caused by sin. Sin will discover itself. You can tell the thief in a group by the way in which he looks at the stolen thing. "Be sure your sin will find you out." There may remain a hidden part of unrighteousness which men fail to see, yet there is inwrought in the life and character the impure thought, word and deed which will speak out in very undesirable times and places. The seed will grow, though the harvest be late. Prehistoric sins become historic in their effects. The story of extinct races, decaying

and dead civilizations, is often the tale of hidden iniquity.

Sin will reveal itself to the minutest detail. There are interior scenes and acts in every life which disclose the frailties and follies of youth. Character is analyzed by inward motives and movements. Nathaniel Hawthorne's tale of "Ethan Brand" describes the search after and discovery of the unpardonable sin. In his desire to find some sin beyond the reach of divine mercy he employs the art of hypnotism, by which he is enabled to look into the souls of men. Eighteen years of weary wandering are spent in his hellish quest, and at last he returns to the lime-kiln which he had forsaken, to find another man at his post as lime-burner. He tells him that he has discovered the unpardonable sin in his own breast. During the night he leaps into the hissing flames of the kiln, and in the morning his burnt skeleton is seen enclosing a calcined heart, the fire refusing to destroy the organ hardened through sin. It is the story of the quest of forbidden knowledge and the end of moral degradation. The smallest sin will reveal itself to the man who perpetrates it. There is no escape from iniquity. Sin will reveal itself to us. Punishment is inward, as seen in blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horrors of

conscience, and vile affections. We carry within ourselves the soil in which wrong-doing grows, and the weeds will choke the growth of goodness. The sea of iniquity will give up its dead. The remains of iron vessels may sometimes be seen on the sea-shore being gradually imbedded in the sand, and the day may come, centuries hence, when these shall be discovered by posterity and compared with the dug-out canoe, and made to tell the story of the stage of civilization of our own century; so sin may lie buried in our memory to be found after many years and to bring many heartaches. Sin will find me out. Right or wrong doing in relation to physical and spiritual nature is sure in the end to meet with its own appropriate reward or punishment. The discovery of sin is not confined to ourselves, for though we may hide it ever so cunningly, there are eyes around us, twice ten thousand, which behold the scars unknown to ourselves. Our fellow men are explorers of character. The eye of society possesses the combined powers of the telescope and microscope, and its ear is a microphone. The Omniscient Eye pierces the shadow of sinful man and finds the secret place where sin dwells. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked," for He can see into the depth of the human heart, scanning its caves and dens where iniquity

lurks. Sin will reveal man to himself. Men desire photographs of themselves, and sin is an accurate photographer. It paints man with all his blemishes. It takes the picture complete, and the man becomes ashamed and throws a screen over the picture.

Sin will lead a man captive before God. There is a man trying to hide himself from his Maker like Adam in the garden, seeking a recess where the Almighty may not discover him ; but sin drives him out of his retreat, and compels him to stand in the presence of God while he strives to flee. Swedenborg represents men in the other world seeking to utter words contrary to their thoughts and unable to do so, and Danté describes men in hell trying to look forward, and they are compelled to look over the shoulder. Every man will be seen in his true light. Sin leads man away from God into the land of slavery, the territory where sinful passions reign and men try to escape ; but habit has built a wall which he cannot climb, and he cries in feebleness for liberty, but his voice is drowned in the strife of passion. Sin leads him away from God, and finally leads him captive before God.

Sin leads man captive before his fellow men, and whilst he is trying to escape and keep his mouth shut, he is unable to do so. He con-

fesses his crime to others while he is striving to remain quiet. He is angry at himself for his weakness in making this confession ; yet confess he must, for sin is his conqueror. Conscience takes possession of the sinner and cries aloud. Man contends with his conscience and tries to stifle his voice, but he is helpless. The contestants strive for mastery, the battle rages unseen by mortals, the angels and God look on in pity, and the clouds of heaven fall when man has won the day. Oppressed with vicious habits the sinner turns to flee, running for his life in eager haste, shouting in despair for help, but sin is on his track. Faster he runs, but the enemy knows nothing of mountains or rivers, and keeps close behind him. Doggedly he continues, but the dark foe is encircled with clouds, and with skillful throw he catches the sinner in the meshes of his net. It is a race toward life which ends in defeat and death. Paternal love seeks to save the sinner, but eternal justice holds in its hand the broken laws of divine majesty and truth, and demands the death of the foe of God. The lictors of the Divine Ruler have their home within us, and fail not to carry out the sentences of eternal justice, and the stripes they inflict are seen through our garments of flesh. Divine justice discovers sin in us, and will not let us go. It is not

without us as a fact, but within us as a great yearning.

Conscience cries out for the living God and clamors for retribution, beginning here the punishment, which points to a day of judgment. The pain which conscience inflicts is like an old wound, unfitting the man for battle by sapping his vigor. There is a sense of gloom inseparable from the concealment of a fault. "Roger Malvin's Burial," by Hawthorne, depicts a scene in a forest where Roger Malvin and his companion, Reuben Bourne, have been wounded in a fight with Indians, and as they are returning home, Roger, the elder of the two men, unable to proceed further, beseeches Reuben to go to the settlement and secure help; and if this arrives too late, to give him a decent burial. The young man reluctantly leaves his companion, and on reaching home is nursed back to health by the daughter of Roger, to whom he is betrothed. In his weakness he has failed to make known the condition of his wounded companion, who is left to perish. The young woman believes that her father is dead. After Reuben's marriage he is unfortunate in business and moves farther west. Haunted by the fate of his father-in-law he lives in continual gloom. Camping one evening in the forest, he hears a rustle among the foliage, and believing that it is

a deer, he raises his musket and fires, only to find that he has killed his own son, and it is at the foot of the rock where the unburied skeleton of Roger Malvin lies. With a stricken heart the tears gush out like water from a rock, the unfulfilled vow has been redeemed in after years, and for the first time for years a prayer ascends from his lips, the sin is expiated, and the curse is removed by the blood of his son. The ideal man must have a conscience at the core of his sympathies. The inward monitor finds the man, reveals his sin, and demands satisfaction. The sins of bygone years are revived and revealed by the unswerving law of righteousness. The hidden gains are restored to their proper owners, the double life must at last be confessed, the desire for domestic felicity must remain unsatisfied, and the foul blot on the innocent man must be removed, so that out of decrepitude and despair there must come beauty of character, sweetness of disposition and a useful life.

There are sins which may be discovered by senses in us which are now hidden. Laura Bridgman's sense of feeling suggests avenues for the revelation of sin by means now unknown to us. This lady, blind, deaf and dumb, recognized fifty persons by a touch of the hand. She insisted that the circulation of the blood makes a noise, and putting the hand of a person

on her neck to feel the pulsations, she would say with her fingers, "Sit still and see if you do not hear it." She detected noise by her touch more quickly than some people can by the ear. She said, "Sound comes through the floor to my feet up to my head." She knew when anyone was in the room by the motion of the air made in talking and moving. When some one spoke she said, "I feel them talk." When some one played the organ in the hall above her, she said, "Why does the house shake?" When asked how she knew when to get up, she said, "I put my hand to the door, near to the bed, to feel it shake. I put my finger in the key-hole, if the girls are up it shakes." She found delight in placing a music-box in a chair and putting her feet upon the rounds to feel it play. May not sin thus be discovered in the future by vibrations in the air.

Sin has a deadening effect upon the mind, conscience and affections. Wherever there is a sense of sin there is evidence of life, but when that is lost, spiritual waste is going on in the soul. Seek after material things and you will grow like them. Midas loves his gold until his nature becomes as hard as the idol of his heart. The soul may die a little every day, the prayers becoming more feeble, the struggle in the darkness growing less, the vision of a flower, or

human face, or sky, starting it back into life, to flutter less wildly, until with an ever-lessening effort for its survival it shrivels and dies. The heart of man is as a poisoned root which sends its poison to all the branches and leaves. It is the seminal root of millions more of all manner of sin which has never been acted. Punishment lurks concealed in our pleasures. Crime and punishment grow out of the same stem. Indulgences of sense and the satisfaction of our own wills are the seeds of all those miseries which attain the full expansion of their deadly fruits in hell.

There are forces outside of man which discover sin, wrong-doing is punished by other forces besides those of a man's own conscience. When a man has fallen so low as to be incapable of remorse, there are forces outside of our own temperament enlisted to punish us. The forces of nature avenge the wrongs of people. As men attempt to quench the flames of a mountain on fire by throwing water upon it, and discover that they are only adding to its fury, for the mountain is composed of lime, so there resides in the human heart the materials for a great conflagration, and it needs only external forces to start and continue the flames. There are retributive providences which discover sin. It is not mere accident that brings

to light the sins of former years, for there is an overwatching Providence of judgment in human life. The sinful secrets of the soul are revealed in letters of fire by the sudden appearance of an old enemy or stranger, the discovery of some old letters, the passing word of a little child, or a sentence in a book. The unhealed sore discharges afresh through contact with a hard substance, and the secret is found at last by a retributive Providence. Human laws discover sin, and in our social life there are great principles and great forces which form the corporate conscience by which man is punished. There are persons who seem to be providentially appointed to stimulate the laggard conscience, the moral sense of the community steps in with its judgments and protests against forms of vice as a reminder of the wrath of God, and influences linger as shadows in human custom to keep men from wrong-doing. The Bible finds man out, and the Holy Spirit convinces of sin.

There is a law of retribution in other worlds. Death is not the extreme limit of all punishment, but in view of the judgment the beginning of them. "There are yesterdays that can never be revoked." Beyond the bounds of time sin follows us in its effects. There may be penitence and reformation after an evil course, but the results of sin abide. The broken vase

may be mended, but it will never again be the beautiful vessel without seam or flaw. And the vicious life has sown seeds which die not ; seeds which will germinate after the better life is begun. Retribution is inherent in sin, the punishment abides with it.

“ Never by lapse of time, the soul defaced by crime
 Into its former self returns again ;
For every guilty deed, holds in itself the seed
 Of retribution and undying pain.”

Eternal justice yearns for punishment such as this life cannot bring. Conscience tells us that we are being pursued by One who will overtake us at last, and it craves for just retribution. Native religions teach us that all men expect future retribution, and this is the teaching of the Bible. Every good and every evil deed deserves its own reward and punishment, and justice requires every man to receive his own. God is just, and there will be in the future a recognition of the good and evil, and a righteous distribution to every man. God must and will punish the sinner. Future retribution must be preached as the complement to the glory of the Cross. Could you listen to the story of the least sin as it is told in hell, what a revelation it would be. Could you lay your ears to hell and stand behind the screen to hear sin spoken of in

the dialect of the sons of perdition—Cain telling the story of the murder of Abel, Judas relating the narrative of his hypocrisy and treason against the Christ—it would make the ears tingle and the heart tremble to its lowest depths :

“ Through me you pass into the city of woe ;
Through me you pass into eternal pain ;
Through me among the people lost for aye,
Before me things create were none, save things
Eternal, and eternal I endure,
All hope abandon ye who enter here.”

You may insist upon a perfection in your companions, surroundings and society of which you form a part which is not in yourself, and this is fatal to the welfare of your own soul and injurious to your whole life. For the worst of men there is hope of salvation. While you remain here the invitations of mercy are for you. You may have lived under the spell of sin, delighting in its fatal scents, decking your bosom with its scarlet blossoms, feeding upon its deadly poisons, until all who come within your reach were scarified by your touch, but though you have been nourished with poison, and craved evil as your daily food, you are a creature of God, and there awaits you the healing balm of the kind Physician to destroy

the malign influences which seemed to determine your fate. And you need not die but live, for His skill surpasses human understanding or angelic knowledge, and he will give you health, salvation and peace. In humble faith lift up your eye to the Man on the Cross and the spell will be broken, for you may be saved and live to rejoice in God and bless the world.

THE DEMAND FOR CONFESSION.

“Confess yourself to heaven ;
Repent what’s past ; avoid what is to come.”

—*Shakespeare.*

“Our consciences are not of the same pattern, an inner deliverance of fixed laws—they are the voice of sensibilities as various as are our memories.”—*George Eliot.*

“I have sinned.”—*Luke 15 : 18, 21.*

EVERY man carries within himself the materials for at least one book of surpassing interest. If any man could and would write a faithful record of all he ever thought, felt and experienced, without concealing or extenuating anything—a true history of his intellectual and spiritual life—it would be a book of unique interest and value. But such a book will never be written. We have had Confessions and Apologies from Augustine and Rousseau to Newman and Amiel, but these are partial histories and not complete lives. Every man has an invisible spiritual history awaiting a George Eliot or Nathaniel Hawthorne to discover, study and write for the good of men. We need the insight of a seer to think ourselves into the ex-

periences of men. When you see a man walking toward you, it may be easy to ask how he will behave; but it will be a hard task to learn why he behaves in a particular way. You cannot judge human character from an outside estimate, for the noblest natures sometimes reveal blunders which make you stagger—the man of genius, unable to provide for his own family; the woman of brains and plans, whose life is a series of mistakes; and the stalwart man linked to a mean soul, clad in physical beauty. Life is full of contrasts, and the key to the blunders of many lives must be sought in the motives, the hindrances which lie within, and the spirit wrestling against universal pressure. The outer life is sometimes a comedy and the inner a tragedy. Heroism, tyranny and crime may clothe themselves in common garb and walk beside you on the pavement. The inner life of the people you know best may be a tragedy more intense and deep than any fiction you have read with throbbing heart and streaming eyes. Many a fault may come from a hard sorrow which has maimed the nature when it was expanding into beauty, just as you have seen the young branches of beautiful trees lopped off when they were pouring forth their richest juices, only to leave a rough excrescence to mark the wound. A fine-grained soul,

through some great trouble, has become snarled and caustic, and is harshly treated by his fellows because they have failed to read the story of his inner life.

Men are tempted to live a double life. The desire to appear noble and heroic before your fellow men makes it difficult to speak the exact truth about your feelings ; indeed, without any motive to appear false, it is easy for you to say fine things about your own experience. The consciousness that you are being looked at by the world makes you an actor of parts, acting a character that does not belong to you, and yet there may seem to be no true motive for this attitude before the world. There are some people whose celestial intimacies do not improve their domestic manners, whose imitative piety and native worldliness are equally sincere, and who think the invisible powers will be soothed by a parenthetical recognition of the Almighty. The wild beasts of the passions which roar and struggle in man's inner nature are let loose at set times and places, and the menagerie is closed from the public gaze when it is convenient. The language of Heinrich Heine, "I am doomed to love what is most degraded and most foolish : imagine how that must pain a man who is proud and intellectual," with slight modifications, is the pathetic cry of many souls.

Conduct is not always the expression of a man's character ; indeed an act may sometimes misrepresent the true spirit of a man, and you are then liable to misjudge him. The incompleteness of this life, with its failures, misery, waste, tragedies and mystery, is an argument for another life, when the burden, pain and sorrow shall cease, and sin shall be lost in holiness, and unending peace shall be the fulfilment of the plan of God toward the creature made in His own image.

There are some men who live two distinct lives, a religious and a wicked one, whose desires are stronger than their theoretical beliefs. These Bulstrodes of fiction explain gradually the gratification of their desires into satisfactory agreement with their religious beliefs.

You may hunger for the brilliant position, expecting freedom in the higher place, and you may snatch it with terror because the taint of sacrilege is upon it, but you will endure purgatory upon earth, for there are roots of conscience within you. Conscience enlists memory as the historian of the soul to keep alive the times misspent, the lost opportunities, the hopes blasted, and the spoken words which would have been better unsaid, that the future may not be altogether wasted, and the way to God may be found at last. The pathos of the vision of

memory is felt in the lines suggestive of Poe's "Raven," written by an anonymous poet on the fly-leaf of an early copy of Roger's "Pleasures of Memory":

"Alone at midnight's haunted hour,
When nature woos repose in vain,
Remeembrance wakes her penal power,
The tyrant of the burning brain.
She tells of times misspent ; of comforts lost ;
Of fair occasions gone forever by ;
Of hopes too fondly nursed, too rudely crossed ;
Of many a cause to wish, yet fear to die !
For what, except the instinctive fear
Lest she survive, detains me here,
When all the life of life is fled ?
What but the deep, inherent dread,
Lest she beyond the grave resume her reign,
And realize the hell that priests and beldames feign."

There is a demand for confession. Man must confess his sin. "I have sinned," must at some time fall from every human lip. There may be a conscious and voluntary confession, but there will be a compulsory confession. Unconsciously men make confessions. Let a man enter your home, and recline in a chair so that he falls asleep, and he pays a compliment to your abode, and to your qualities as a host. This action is a confession that he is not in a prison, or among enemies; but in a place where he is safe among friends. When a man decides upon a wrong

course, although he may not have performed an act, conscience begets anguish of mind, so that, like Brutus, he is deprived of sleep and his behaviour gives his wife reason to suspect the cause of his disquietude. "Since Cæsarius first did whet me against Cæsar, I have not slept." A guilty conscience needs not an accuser. The misery of sin is a confession to the world that there are evil motives prompting to wicked deeds. Nature compels you to exhibit your soul to the world. The picture in the face of the dissipated man tells the story of his disgraceful life. You cannot look like an innocent flower and have a serpent in your heart. The miser tells the world in his pile of gold the tale of his inner and bigoted nature. The perfect flower derives its loveliness and perfume, and the yellow lily sucks its obscene life and noisome odor from the same black mud where the slimy eel and speckled frog and mud-turtle sleep; and from the same moral circumstances in the world men and women find what is ugly and evil, while others enjoy the fragrance of beautiful lives. The wrinkles and furrows on the faces of people are the records of actual experiences in life. Venice, the successor of Tyre in perfection of beauty, sin and punishment, is an illustration of the truth, "He shall return to do judgment and justice." Ruskin says: "Never had a city a more glorious Bible. Among the

nations of the north, a rude and shadowy sculpture filled their temples with confused and hardly legible imagery ; but, for her, the skill and the treasures of the east had gilded every letter and illumined every page, till the book-temple shone from afar off like the star of the Magi. The sins of Venice, whether in her palace or in her piazza, were done with the Bible at her right hand. And when, in her last hours, she threw off all shame and all restraint, and the last great square of the city became filled with the madness of the whole earth, be it remembered how much her sin was greater because it was done in the face of the house of God, burning with the letters of his law. Mountebank and masquer laughed their laugh and went their way ; and a silence has followed them, not unforetold, for amidst them all, through century after century of gathering vanity and fostering guilt, the white dome of St. Mark's had uttered in the dead ear of Venice : ‘ Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.’ ”

The guilt which sin brings into the human soul is a confession of sin. This makes a breach in the soul which can never be repaired in this mortal life, for though the citadel be guarded, the foe waits outside to enter stealthily, and even if kept at bay, the broken wall gives evidence of the ruin. The fiend raging in the

human breast is more hideous than when seen in his own form. The blood stain on the conscience tortures the soul beyond human expression. The dullness of the spiritual nature as a consequence of sin, is an involuntary confession of wrong-doing. Foul thoughts will lead you through darkness and sorrow amid the glare of the noonday sun. When God displayed His majesty in nature Job said, "Mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself"; and Eliphaz the Temanite found conviction of sin in the solemn grandeur of an oriental night—the darkness evolved a spirit and silence became articulate. The guilt of conscience hears the grass grow and the heart of the squirrel beat. Suspicion haunts the guilty mind; the sinful heart unnerves a man and enfeebles his hand; every noise appals him and a thousand tongues tell the tale of his inner nature. Every landscape and picture expresses the state of soul. You gaze upon the same landscape as your friend, but it is not the same to each of you, for the state of your souls are different, and it is seen in a changed condition through the inner vision. Every heart has its own romance, every blade of grass tells its own story, and every life hides its own secret, which is either a thorn or a spur.

Confession of sin may be made by senses now unknown to us. Have we only five senses, or

are there within us undiscovered senses which transmit the message of our sins to God? Does their dwell within us a spiritual electricity, a method of telegraphing without wires, a means of communicating with the invisible world which is still secret? Sir John Lubbock says that some animals can hear higher notes than man, and see light beyond the range of our eyes. They possess sense organs, the use of which we are as yet entirely ignorant, and these may be the seats of unknown senses. In some animals there are complex organs of sense richly supplied with nerves, the functions of which organs we are as yet powerless to explain. This suggests the probability that there exist in us senses undiscovered, and these may be the medium for the revelations of eternity. There is an inward demand for confession. Who is the master within us that compels us to expose ourselves to the world and God, that drives us to lay bare the secrets of the heart, revealing the secret sins, removing the garments to show our nakedness, stripping off the shams and masks that others may read what is there? Conscience compels you to expose your folly; the inward demand for peace compels you to confess your sin; the expectation of pardon urges you to repent.

There is an outward demand for confession. Sometimes a man must confess to men to ensure

peace of mind. Those who have been wronged demand an apology from the transgressor. Society demands it from him who has broken its unwritten laws, civil government demands it from the criminal, and the Church demands it from its members who have disobeyed the rules. A threatening providence sometimes compels the sinner to make a public exposure of his sin as a kind of propitiation. Self-prostration is sometimes not sufficient to stay the rod of affliction, but there must be restitution. Hawthorne brings Roger Chillingworth, in the "Scarlet Letter," to the scaffold when the clergyman is just mounting it to openly avow the sin of the past, and the man who had dogged the steps of the minister says : " Hadst thou sought the whole earth over, there was not one place so secret, no high place, no lowly place where thou couldst have escaped me, save on this very scaffold."

There is a divine demand for confession. Man must confess to God " I have sinned." The vice-regent of God in the human soul demands that you confess your sins to God ; the Bible, with its warnings, invitations and promises makes this constant demand ; the terms of salvation include confession of sin ; the justice of God and His love in the sacrifice of Christ demand it. This confession is obligatory and

irresistible. Man must confess to God, and there is no escape from it. This is demanded on earth ; and if you refuse to confess in time, you must humble yourself in eternity and before the presence of the Most High make your abject confession. Obey your conscience and confess your sin to man if needful, but by all means to God. Delay not, but make your confession now, that you may be forgiven. In humble penitence and faith confess your sins, and the promise of the Apostle John will be music in your heart : "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

THE COERCION OF DEEDS.

“ Our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds.”—*George Eliot.*

“ One vice is related to another, changes into another, and he who begins with the transgression of one commandment finds it easy, sometimes it is inevitable, to fall into manifold condemnation.”—*W. L. Watkinson.*

“ All snakes fascinate their prey, and pure wickedness seems to inherit the power of fascination granted to the serpent.”—*Aniel.*

“ He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul.”—*Prov. 8 : 36.*

- THE cardinal question for the human race in all ages is sin. This lies at the root of character. Is sin a physical disease, to be treated medicinally as the germs of fever or consumption ; is it a defect of the intellect, to be eradicated by education ; is it the result of circumstances which may be controlled, or does it lie deep in the heart and will, requiring divine skill to remove it by a new birth ? This is the question which touches all religions, affects all creeds and dogmas, and is the central truth of philosophy, science and religion. Is sin a disease or a mere blunder ? Is it to be treated in the



abstract or in the concrete? The real answer to all our surmisings is to be found in the Cross of Christ. We do not need a new brain, new hands, feet, eyes, or tongue, or new conditions in life, but a new heart and life—the renewal of the inner man by the power which comes from the Cross of Christ. It is not the reformation of manners that we must seek, but the regeneration of the nature. Sin is not skin-deep—its poison penetrates the deepest recesses of the human heart. You cannot afford to have a frivolous idea of sin, as it touches the deepest and largest interests of your life, and, like a foul disease, carries serious personal consequences in its train and separates you from all that is noble, wise and good. Those who entertain a frivolous idea of sin suppose that there is a gulf between good people and themselves.

Never was the deep heinousness of sin unfolded until Christ came, the native religions of the world knowing little of the evil inwrought in the nature of man; but with the advent of Christianity the sense of sin was deepened, by teaching the capacity and dignity of human nature, and showing the justice, holiness and love of God, against whom the sin was committed. The story of the Cross reveals the gross enormity of evil; and when sin and its consequences are studied in the dawn of the Light of

the World, there is felt the deep antagonism to all material, intellectual and spiritual progress of the individual and the race. There are soul laws which are as real and rigid as nature's laws, by which the soul is hurried to hell or its flight is hastened to heaven.

The history of nations, movements, doctrine and individual character is progressive. Start a certain wheel in the machine, and the whole is set in motion ; and originate a thought, motive, impulse, word or deed, and the whole character of a man vibrates in unison. There are no solitary deeds or silent acts. Actions love company, and have a voice that sounds through the temples of time and echoes through the chambers of eternity. Deeds are germinative and perpetuate themselves, as seeds planted in the soil are nourished and produce their kind. There is no arrest in nature or grace by which growth is changed to something else, but harvest succeeds seed-sowing in body, intellect and soul. The universal law of seed-sowing and harvest exists in the natural, moral and spiritual universe. You may not be able to see the processes by which an act becomes a habit and develops into character, but there are real things which the eyes cannot see and the fingers are unable to touch. Your character is growing better or worse every day, by the trivial acts

which unfold themselves gradually yet surely till the eternal years. Build a wall around the soul to repress the growth of the evil hidden there, yet the sap of the living tree will break down the bricks and mortar, and the perversion of the nature will be seen in the decay and final destruction of the noblest creature of God. A small coffee plant was sent from the Botanical Gardens, in Edinburgh to Blantyre in Nyassaland, and in sixteen years there were derived about five million coffee-plants, which have become one of the main sources of the prosperity of the British settlements in that country ; and from a single thought, word and act there come descendants without number which will affect posterity for good or evil. A bad thought cannot be cherished without injury, a book cannot be read or a picture looked at for a moment without lasting impressions being produced.

Were vicious acts to produce misery to your fellow beings, and not to yourselves, there might be some satisfaction in living in sin, but you are so constituted that single deeds injure yourselves as well as others. The words and acts of your lives touch many lives, as you may observe the moral effect of a noble example. A single act of heroic virtue or illustrious self-denial, as that of John Howard, gives a new impulse to

the moral character of the age, and reflection upon such noble deeds produces a change in the moral natures of men. Every man is accompanied by persons who are like plates, ready to receive impressions from the words and acts of every-day life. Every man is a daily newspaper read closely by his fellows, who gather up the fragments of news which assimilate with his character. Every man is a sage to some other man whose thoughts of good and evil are treasured in the memory and influence the life. Deeds grow after the actors have left the scenes of earth. Theodore Parker, dying in Italy, said : "There are two Theodore Parkers : one of them is dying in Italy, the other I have planted in America, and it will continue to live." There is an immortality on earth in spite of all we do. Death intensifies our personality. Silent invisible forces continue their battle for good or evil after you are dead. Heredity works itself out in character. This is seen in nations, tribes, families and individuals. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation.

There is a coercion of deeds seen and felt in the ripening of character. Right motives unfold themselves in plans, purposes, words and deeds, and the whole character is made strong under their guidance. When the authority of

conscience is supreme the appetites and passions will be so controlled that you will enjoy all the happiness of which you are capable, and the more frequently you do what is right, the stronger will be the impulse to do right, and the greater will be the pleasure derived from doing it. The philanthropist finds increasing pleasure in his gifts, and the man of religious instinct and purpose enlarges his power for doing good and deepens his happiness. Men and women are called to pass through stages of transition in the development of character. There is a transfiguring influence in a great sorrow upon some hearts, for there are sweet uses in adversity. Tribulation and selfish gaiety works differently upon the hearts of men. A bag of gold wizens an old man's face, its loss brings anguish to his soul ; but the presence of a little child in his home brings sweetness into his nature and beauty into his life. The ordeals of life beget thoughtful piety, unselfishness and heroic strength ; a great anguish, a baptism of suffering, may do the work of years, for weak and blemished characters may leave their frailties behind them in the fire. Men are not angels to begin with, but frail mortals, and years of poverty and misery may bring sweetness and self-restraint. Thoreau tells us that the pond-lily opens its virgin bosom to the first sunlight, and perfects

its being in the magic of the genial kiss ; and so may you turn your face toward God and enjoy beauty, strength and sweetness, from the love that ever shines through the glory of His presence. A real, true and beautiful life is wrought through adherance to duty and faith in God. The best manners are acquired by recognizing the presence of God. Your own example is dangerous, for when you have done a thing once it is easier to do it again, human nature having a tendency to run in grooves. Virtue is made perfect by acts of virtue often repeated, the custom of well-doing begets the habit of well-doing, and effort is required in all well-doing ; being wrong and doing wrong comes naturally without much effort.

There is a coercion of deeds in the growth of evil character. Sin entices with its numerous attractions, as hurtful passions draw us toward an abyss, by a kind of vertigo, and then enslaves. Every man may be master or slave ; he may control his nerves or his temper, or they may enslave him. Sinful passions may destroy his physical powers, distort his imagination, weaken his memory and reasoning faculties, injure his sense of beauty, and debase his soul. Drink relaxes the grip of conscience, invigorates the passions, destroys the power of calculating consequences, favors the plotting and commission

of crimes, creates artificial wants, favors greed and desperate lawless efforts to supply them. Sinful deeds demand not interest but usury; they grow like the infinite circles made by a stone thrown into water, one sinful deed following another, as the higher Alpine glacier follows the lower melting glacier. Foul acts transform themselves into the lore of fiends, which mortals cannot translate or understand. Perseverance in wickedness makes a man bolder in crime; timidity in the earliest stages of guilt gives place to recklessness, and, unchecked by conscience, the sinner exercises less precaution until, as though bereft of reason, he rushes onward to ultimate ruin. As a rival of the hero in the Grecian games sought to destroy the monument raised by the fellow citizens of the victor, and by repeated efforts moved it from its pedestal, and as it fell was crushed to death, so sin destroys the sinner even when he is attempting in his own strength to throw it down. An indulged infirmity of purpose may produce disastrous results in wrong-doing. You may slip away from unpleasant things and think only of your own safety, and yet commit deeds of infamy. Calamity may come to you when you are seeking to escape from the disagreeable things, and the calamity falling on a base mind will bring a sorrow which knows no healing

balm. Wrong motives will cause you to drift toward tremendous decisions in sin. Your poverty may tempt you to forgery, your social position may lead you to take a false step in life, and finally you may accept the temptation and perform the deed which your heart protests against and says is wrong. The memory of a moral collapse is a force tending to perpetuate wrong-doing. There is no remedy by which the troubles which haunt the mind can be obliterated, leaving the sinner in the possession of an irreproachable past, with the memory of all other events unimpaired ; but it is certain that the consciousness of knowledge, now veiled by our material organs, will return when these have been laid aside, and remorse in the present life is memory and conscience quickened by wrong-doing. Brooding upon evil scenes, foul passions and abnormal feelings will pollute the imagination beyond redemption, the images of the past will haunt the mind for years to come. The ladies of the dissolute court of Verona said of Danté, " See the man who has been in hell !" And the poet answered with a bitter smile, " In hell now—in hell at Verona."

A guilty man is objectively and subjectively a worse man, for every sinful action done naturally disposes a man to do another like action. Sin may be present to annoy or destroy, the

inward king of terrors rules as a despot, and death is going on gradually as a spiritual disease. The logic of habit induces you to believe that, because the spiritual structure has not been destroyed through lapse of time, there is no imminent danger, just as a miner has no fear of the roof of the mine falling, because he has worked in it for forty years, and yet at that moment it is sinking. The depth of your doom will be proportioned to the height of your privileges. If, like Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, you have been exalted to heaven with privileges and opportunities, and you have remained unchanged, you will be cast down to hell ; the darkness into which you are plunged will be in proportion to the brightness of the light you have spurned. There is an inexorable logic of consequences. Sin advances downward, one deed begets a train, shamelessness is developed by repeated acts of iniquity, and the concealment of sin is no assurance of security to the sinner. The highest life is given, not to animals, but to angels and men, and it is possible for the greatest genius of the age to be doomed for sensuality. Your whole life may be tinged with evil on account of a single false step ; a small matter may bring about great and fatal consequences ; and whilst you are encouraging your heart that the sin is small and you need not

trouble yourself much in relation to it, the poison is coursing through your veins, and the end will be death. A little zinc patch of repairs on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem was the occasion of the Crimean war. The roof of the dome leaked; the Latin Church proposed to repair it, and the Greek Church objected. Then a further strife arose about the use of some keys to the more sacred chapels. Russia, as the patron of the Greek Church, offered to repair the roof, and took up the question of the keys; France took the side of the Latin Church. The Turks were ordered by Russia to repair the building, and they refused. France favored the Turks, and England supported the French, and Sebastopol was besieged—a small matter in the beginning, but terrible in its consequences. So, from a hasty word, a wrong motive, an impure passion, a debased feeling, or a wicked act your own life and the lives of your family, friends, Church and nation may be deeply affected; and eternal consequences may flow from a single germ of sin, which, at the beginning, might easily have been destroyed. Conscious wickedness seeks companionship, finding delight in the debasement of others, and is unhappy in the solitariness of sin. Human character vibrates in unison with the souls of men, as two clocks

with pendulums oscillating over similar arcs will often start each other. Men and nature are so constructed that when the vibrations of two substances correspond, the motion of one will often set the other in motion ; a human voice will sometimes cause a glass shade or delicate vessel to crack or break because it strikes the keynote of that vessel ; the bark of a dog will sometimes set piano strings vibrating ; a deaf mute may hear the single note of a musical instrument and the whistle of a locomotive when it strikes the same note ; so in human character, you may awaken a response in the heart and life of your fellows by your sinful thought, motive, word and act, and you cannot dodge the natural consequences of your sin. There are pitfalls in the world where you think yourself safe, and if you persist in that folly which seeks pleasure at any expense, you will perish in the hidden depths of increasing iniquity.

There is a coercion of deeds in the weakening of character; growth in unconscious wickedness. Sinful indulgence will change an honest man into a deceiver—a wrong thing being done at first with timidity and pangs of conscience ; then there comes a change, when he is reconciled to the wrong course of action, and finally he concludes that this course is practically right

and he cannot follow any other. Take the case of a strictly moral man engaged in the business of a druggist where liquor is sold in small quantities under the certificate of a medical man. At first he keeps his business agreeable to the law ; occasionally he sells without the doctor's prescription, and his conscience reproves him ; then he becomes bolder, urged on by the profits of the trade and his need of money, and he is reconciled to his wrongful position, and by and by he engages in the business of selling liquor to the destruction of his trade in drugs, seeking only to evade detection ; and he believes this is right, because he is in need of a certain sum of money and he must pay his debts. The honest man has become a deceiver and believes he is doing right ; but this is the natural course of indulgence in sin. He has fallen upon a parenthesis of famine and paralysis, and in a dismal time of deadness, bent only on the satisfaction of his passions, he can see only a narrow boundary between right and wrong. Sin is a parasite feeding upon the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual nature of man. You cannot feed upon it, but it will feed upon you until not only does it draw its life from your life, but, like a serpent coiling around its victim or a tree embracing another, it will entwine to crush and destroy. Indulgence in sin weakens the char-

acter by repetition, the false appetite grows as in a drunkard or dyspeptic until it becomes master. A life of worldliness saps and undermines the physical constitution, the nervous system is impaired, real robustness and muscular powers are blighted, the blood is poisoned, and terrible vengeance is wreaked upon man's physique. Sin destroys the power of the will on behalf of virtue. You desire to live a life of devotion, a life that will bless men, benefit yourself, and glorify God ; but you are unable to do so because your will has been impaired by sin. When you break the law of God you are breaking down your own powers of resistance to evil. Every transgression is adding a stroke to the chisellings which are shaping you for an inevitable hell ; and when you advance from the violation of law to insolent rejection of Christ, resisting His repeated appeals, you are fitting yourself for fellowship with devils. Sin blunts the feelings, first impressions being lively, but growing less by repetition, until the power of enjoyment is paralyzed. Frequent exercise begets a habit, and the sinful character becomes abiding. Good impulses are destroyed and the memory is impaired by deeds of unrighteousness. Time and sin, by a slow but sure process, works destruction in the temple of your memory, and the mind and heart are changed, so that we

forget the best interests and truest instincts of our nature. This is practically expressed by Gourlay :

“ She clung to his breast in grief and tears—
‘ We part for a while,’ said she ;
‘ But neither time, nor force, nor fears,
Shall sever me from thee !’

• • • • •
“ Her daughter came with a tarnished book
(Long years had passed away),
‘ There’s a name writ here—my mother—look !
I’ve ne’er seen till to-day.’

“ She closed the book of forgotten lays,
With a quiet hand and slow ;
‘ Tis the name of a friend of my girlhood’s days,
I fancied long ago.”

The faculties of the mind are injured by vice, the brain tissue is laid waste, the power of thinking is weakened, impatience and incapacity for everything true and noble is begotten, the conversation becomes vapid, and every mental faculty is corroded and weakened. The energies of body, mind and soul are misdirected by a life of worldliness ; the conscience is seared by sinful indulgence ; the soul is enslaved until hackneyed in sin. You cannot see the face of God, you misinterpret the Bible to suit your fancy and spiritual state, and you crucify Christ

afresh. You are hurried onward to eternity by the terrible pressure of your sinful deeds. The real evil of sin is disguised in many ways, but it exists. It gathers by unseen degrees as the brooks and rivers in their journey to the sea, and it benumbs the soul with a drowsiness until death ensues, as the noxious gases in a room silently steal away the life of the sleeper. God has flung abroad far and wide over the earth his blessings for you to gather—the genial days of autumn, the leisure of nature, the flowers and the grass and the birds—as a promise of eternity and an expression of His love toward you, and He calls upon you to be true to His intention of good toward you, to have faith in the final victory of truth, and to follow it at all hazards, to do your work in His name and in the perfected vigor of your life, and to let Him into your soul, to fill it with light, gladness and peace, and then you cannot fail, for God is King and He will save you.

THE MASTER IN THE SOUL.

“ O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me !
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.”

—*Shakespeare.*

“ I am not able to recall, nor do I wish to recall anything ;
for it is neither safe nor honest to do anything against
conscience. Here stand I ; I cannot do otherwise. God help me !
Amen !”—*Luther.*

“ There is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemned
He deals on his own soul.”

—*Byron.*

“ When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature
the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a
law unto themselves : which shew the work of the law written
in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their
thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.”
—*Rom. 2 : 14, 15.*

HAD we the vision of a seer we could see in
the streets of our modern cities men and women
who had lost their souls in their eager quest after
the baubles of earth, scattered by the hand of
the tempter. They know not their poverty, be-
cause the prince of this world hath blinded their
eyes ; but they have starved their souls, having

forgotten their need of nourishment, and now they are dead. Should one of these persons discover his loss, and begin a search for his soul, how eagerly would he pursue his quest, running through the lanes, enquiring of every passer-by if he had seen anything of his lost treasure. Not a single country would be left unvisited, not a tribe or individual would be passed by, and how great would be his joy when, at last, he had found his soul. This would be a discovery greater than the finding of a gold mine, for there is nothing to be compared in value to the soul of a single man. Let the subject of a great empire be seized by a foreign power and thrust into a dungeon, manacled and starved, and not alone would the people of his nation demand his release, but the army would rise in his defence ; and not less is the commotion among the armies of the spiritual world when a soul is in captivity and will not be released. A human soul is of supreme importance, especially if it is your soul. The finding of a lost soul is of greater moment than the discovery of a new world. When a lost soul has been found, examine it, unfold its secrets, and there in that kingdom will be seen conscience as a monarch, dethroned, it is true, but in the remnants of former greatness will there be evidences of a throne and a king and moral government. It matters not for our purpose whether

conscience is a single or a compound faculty. We may study man as an object of natural history, looking into the inner nature of the individual and noting what is there. No sane man has been found in the world without a sense of obligation, without moral instincts and a knowledge of right and wrong. No race or tribe and no individual has been found without a conscience. A man without a conscience would be a monster among his fellows—a soul without any moral government, having a reign of terror among his passions. Every man has a conscience.

How did man come to possess this faculty? It is not something acquired by education, nor is it begotten by spontaneous generation. It is of divine origin. The germs of conscience were implanted in man by God. There is a divinity within the soul. It is the voice of God within, the little spark of celestial fire. The poet calls it the whisper of God, the hell within man, the divine oracle, the vice-regent of God in the human heart, whose still small voice loudest revelry cannot drown. It is the moral reflection of "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The heathen have not been left without an evidence of the love, wisdom and authority of God, who, without the law, have imprinted a divine law upon the tablet of the heart, for they are His children, members of His

great family, and though they may differ in their views of what is righteous in their conduct, the Master of the race has given them a human sense of obligation which is continuous and persistent. The American Indians recognize the divinity in man as well as the divinity in nature. The distinction between right and wrong, and the human sense of responsibility to God, is keener among Christians than among the heathen, owing to the teachings of the Bible, the Public School and the Church, the influences of the Holy Spirit and the example of Christ. The Christian religion intensifies and enlightens the conscience, and hence there follows a higher morality. Contrast the savage Fijian's ideas of theft as a virtue, the Chinese and Indian practice of infanticide, and the degradation of woman among heathen tribes with the principles and conduct of Christian nations.

There is a master within each human breast who issues his orders with no uncertain sound. He demands implicit obedience, and though we may disobey him, he still asserts his authority. The holiest as well as the vilest men feel that he ought to be obeyed. A Nero and a Macbeth acknowledge his authority, though they rebel. This representative of the Divine Majesty is the monarch in the soul, sitting on his throne above the conflict and din of the passions, demanding

order, progress and righteousness. He is supreme in the soul kingdom, preserving man from being the victim of his passions in the hour of temptation. Tear him down from his rightful position and the internal revolution would destroy the inner government, and the man would be thrown into total darkness as deep as hell. It is your duty to follow your conscience rather than your passions. Conscience is not a ready-made faculty, complete and incapable of growth, as may be seen by the difference between the conscience of a heathen and a Christian, an illiterate and educated man, and an individual in the several stages of his experience. It is a germ which grows and may be educated. An orphan child in a godless home, placed in a religious family becomes possessed of a new conscience as the result of the new surroundings and training. A man brought up under the restraints of Christian society emigrating to a new country becomes reconciled to the lawlessness of border ruffianism, and the voice within is stifled until he cannot hear the protest of God. Public opinion influences the individual mind and conscience. The press, the school and the doctrines of sects exert a power for good or evil upon the conscience. There is need of leaders to educate the conscience of society and of the individual. We need men like Luther and Car-

lyle, in whom all that is true in the mind and heart of the people may be brought to a focus, and driven home to our hearts with a courage and enthusiasm born of the Spirit of God. The laws of the land educate men in morality. Christ recognized this fact by giving to the people great moral ideas to be worked through their minds and, by means of social and religious customs, into national laws. The true conscience is supreme and must be obeyed.

The difference between your conscience and mine is not so much a matter of conscience as of understanding. Your heart and mine may be true to God and ourselves, but we do not see things in the same light. The landscape is not the same to each of us, because we view it from different points. Look through the kaleidoscope and then hand it to me—the picture is different because the glass has changed its position. It is not necessary that our actions should be the same that they may be right, for this would imply the destruction of our individuality, and we should be human machines without any responsibility. There is style in literature, business and religion, there are modes of life which distinguish men even in eating and drinking, which are after all only modes of expression. It is a great matter, however, that we be honest, kind, faithful and true in the deepest instincts of

the heart. It is also of importance that both of us bring our hearts to God and the Bible to be taught, and that we seek the light of the Holy Spirit to direct us that we may do no wrong. Men may differ on religious questions and practice, and yet be true men, accepted of God and blessed in their work. Paul and Cornelius were not of the same mind on all things, but they were true in one thing. The Blackfoot Indian at the Sun-dance may be accepted of God, while a more highly-privileged Christian may be rejected. There are modern Socrates and Ciceros among heathen tribes, and a Nero and Judas may still be found among Christians, the one to persecute, the other to simulate. Selling the Master for eighteen dollars, as Judas did, is not altogether a thing of the past. Men may differ on their interpretation of the Bible, and yet be godly men. The Bible is a large book, dealing with profound questions ; therein are principles for all ages and for all peoples, and no man can fathom all its meaning. Sects originate by grasping half-truths and emphasizing special doctrines, forms of Church government and religious rites. Despite these differences there are saints in all denominations. There is a blessing in change as an element of growth. The intellect and soul hunger after God and may find Him through different avenues. There

are differences in our modes of thinking about astronomy, evolution, politics and literature, yet there is a true and abiding element in them which is seized by the student. Controversy is a blessing when truth is the object, but a curse when the passions are dominant.

There are fields for exploration and discovery in the Bible. There is a north pole in it, alluring men to seek to find it. Great is the mystery of godliness. There are some things we don't know in religion. There may be honest differences for conscience sake. Luther and Calvin did not see eye to eye, Wesley and Whitefield were not of the same mind on religious doctrine, the Puritans in the *Mayflower* were not the only Christians of their day, and John Bunyan was not the only martyr when he lived.

Conscience is a judge discriminating between right and wrong for the individual. The true conscience is a righteous judge when it is true to God. Men may have a bias toward evil and go astray, and then we see the perverted mind. The heart is right when it says that marriage with one woman is a divine institution, but it is wrong when it says that marriage with more than one is ordained of God. There may be an evil conscience, a bad heart and an impure mind, and the social conscience must step in to set the individual right. The conscience of Saul

might approve his acts of persecution, just as the horrors of the Inquisition were done in the name of the Christian religion, but these deeds were not righteous. An evil conscience and a perverted mind called evil good and approved of evil as the work of God. The divinity in man approves of what is right and does not call right wrong, if it has been allowed to occupy its true place. You may have doubts as to what you ought to do in difficult times, and for want of light may err, but if the inward monitor has been given the supreme position it will speak at no distant date after the deed is done. There will follow the action a sense of innocence which will uphold you despite what men may say. This is the secret of the courage of martyrs, the steadfastness of true men hounded by the populace, the patient endurance of heroes, and the silence of Christ and the saints when accused by false witnesses. Great and good men have remained as solid as granite, and as enduring as Eddystone rock, when traduced and defamed, because the true conscience has sustained them in the hour of trial. Follow the leading of the inner voice and the motives will be pure. Conscience is not always a true and safe guide, as already shown by the fact that there may be an evil conscience, perverted by false training, but if you keep your heart true to the teachings of

Christ you need not go astray. The practice of godliness begets joyous feelings. There is pleasure in the service of righteousness. The Christian is a true optimist, a hopeful man, who believes in the final victory of truth, the settlement of all wrongs, the creed of the Beatitudes, and the establishment of Christ's empire on earth as an era of peace and blessing to all men. God made man to be happy, and this is the foundation of the search for happiness. The way of virtue is the path of happiness. There is always delight in doing good. No true man is ever sorry that he has been good himself, and has performed a kind act toward his fellows. There is pleasure in the emancipation of slaves, in the suppression of vice, in the overthrow of intemperance, in the education of the young, in missions to the heathen, and in all movements for the welfare of men. There may follow as the result of obedience to godly principles poverty and persecution, yet there will be peace of mind. The Covenanters suffered for their devotion to religious liberty, and the leaders and members of the Disruption of the Church of Scotland were ejected from their churches and manses, yet they enjoyed peace of conscience by adhering to the principles of right. It is better to have peace than prosperity, better to do right than wrong,

better to be Daniel in the den of lions than Belshazzar, better to be Mordecai than Haman, better to be Anne Boleyn than Henry the Eighth, better to be Bunyan than the judge who condemned him, better to be Christ than Pilate. Obedience to the true dictates of the heart is like the obedience of the builder to the plans of the architect, who makes the house grow daily in beauty and strength until finished. The plan of your life lies hidden from your view, but every good desire, thought and act is a part of the plan, and as the heart is always prompting to righteousness and pointing toward God, if the inner voice is obeyed, there will follow strength of character and goodness.

There are times in every man's life when he does not know what to do, he cannot force himself to action by argument, and when he decides upon a course to follow, his heart will not let him, he decides to engage in a certain business or profession but his past training forbids him. A terrible calamity befalls a man and he would fain commit suicide to rid himself of the agony and shame, but the instincts of his heart prevent him. A cloud is resting upon him and he cannot understand why he should suffer innocently, but his heart tells him that some day the darkness will be changed to light and he will be free. Let a man desire

what is good, even though he does not understand whither it will lead him, he will widen the skirts of light and narrow the darkness, and a power divine will help him against the evil. The inner light which comes from the throne of the Most High may not reveal the mysteries of heaven, yet it will shed its radiance upon the duties of earth. The utterance of men's instincts are truer than their thoughts, and when men follow the true messages of the conscience they are not far from the invisible light.

When sin is committed in thought or deed the unsleeping monitor steps in with rod in hand and smites the offending soul with keener stripes than the flesh ever felt. The working of the conscience in even the most abandoned is illustrated by one of the murderers about to assassinate the Duke of Clarence, who says, in relation to conscience, "I'll not meddle with it ; it is a dangerous thing ; it makes a man a coward ; a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him ; a man cannot swear, but it checks him. 'Tis a blushing, shame-faced spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom ; it fills one full of obstacles. It made me once restore a purse of gold that by chance I found. It beggars any man that keeps it." Macbeth, meditating the murder of Duncan, recalls the relations in which he stood to him, and in his deciding not to commit the deed, the

temporary victory of conscience is illustrated. The eye of this inward monitor was the only one that could quell Lord Marmion, and he felt rebuked by this power. This judge condemns and then executes the sentence, thrusting the culprit into a dark cell, and peers through the darkness upon the uncovered heart. He awakens in the hearts of men the expectation of punishment for wrong. A sense of guilt paints the heavens with pictures of condemned souls in colors of fire, and peoples the earth with living leaves and airy spirits, whose tongues utter the judgments of God. The stricken heart seeks to flee from the inferno of its own making as deep as the creation of Danté. The condemned soul may strive to flee from the impending doom, yet approves the punishment just. It acquiesces in the sentence, and though it would fain escape the punishment, concludes that not only has no wrong been done, but that justice has been rendered.

One of the truest instincts of our nature is the human sense of need in the presence of sin for some person to act as mediator for us. The pain of heart through sin is sought to be lessened or removed by the companionship of a true man or woman upon whom you can depend, unto whom you can make your confession and receive sympathy. Human mediators are pro-

vided by the heart as substitutes for the Divine Mediator, which is a confession of need. The human heart cries for a religion, a Saviour and forgiveness, and without an answer the soul is crushed. The sense of guilt makes a man afraid of his fellows lest they may read the secrets of his heart. The only failure a man ought to fear is the failure of cleaving to a true purpose. Let him prefer the good to the evil, and though the way may be dark the end will be light. If there is no path leading out of the ravine and delay means death, plunge into the mountain stream and hope for life and light. Disobedience to the divine law in the heart awakens the sense of shame which is at once the sign of our degradation through sin, and a barrier to greater transgression. The first oath of the youth almost palsies his tongue and paints his cheeks with a crimson hue. This is the compassion of God on the sinner to keep him from rushing headlong to destruction, a danger signal by the way to warn him of the fallen bridge. Conscience prints the inward sin and pain on the human countenance, a lesser brand of Cain to preserve man. In all hearts there is an instinctive fear of sin. God has placed fear as a guardian over the soul to keep it in the path of truth. Repentance is one of the most divine acts, for the greatest human

fault is to be conscious of none. The wisest men are afraid of sin, for punishment as terrible as fire is sure to come. There is nothing can hinder the consuming power of sin, so long as it remains in the human heart. There is an unquenchable fire in the soul on account of sin, which can only cease with the cessation or transformation of the sin. There is a peculiar fascination in fear for the human soul. Preach about hell-fire with intense reality and men will gather and listen while they tremble.

The soul stricken with guilt is in constant dread of the consequences which follow transgression, for the birth of sin is in the human heart, and it must bring forth a progeny of wickedness which will infuse the character and life. There is a recording angel in every heart daily taking notes to be transcribed indelibly upon the tablets of eternity. It is the message of a lie to be extinguished as if it were unable to commit suicide and yet felt it had no right to live. The master in the soul lashes the passions when his government is interfered with, and will not give place to the usurpers who seek his throne. The heart cries out in agony because of the pain gnawing as a worm, never resting, sleepless, consuming and persistent. Remorse smites the sinner as a Brutus sitting at the dead of night in his tent, seeing, as he thought, a

shadowy form whom he asked, "What and whence art thou?" which seemed to answer, "I am thine evil genius, Brutus; we shall meet again at Philippi." Despite the remonstrances of the monitor within, you may go on in sin, descending the path to Avernus, stilling the voice of God, growing in evil thoughts and desires until no longer the judge sits upon the throne, but the passions rule with despotic power, and you are enslaved, shackled and cast into prison, from which there is no escape. Then you will present to the world, the angels and God the terrible spectacle of a man without a conscience. Beware, lest in your heart and life you heed not the voice within, and you are left without God and without hope.

Conscience is a force in the soul, impelling men to do right. It is a master as well as a judge. When you are tempted to do wrong the master in the soul not only says that you should not yield to the temptation, but you must not, at the peril of your life. The master pushes you forward, begetting courage, and making you heroic in the defence of truth. Follow this commander and he will lead you to victory, changing your weakness into strength, transforming your cowardice into heroism, and lengthening your vision of life. This master restrains from evil, keeping the spiritual

nature from obeying the impulse of the passions, and becoming a slave to sinful habits and appetites. Obedience to this master begets self-control and gives victory over the lower nature. When the world beckons you with its allurements to destroy, he calls upon you to retreat; when the music of sin charms you to stop and listen, he raises a storm to deafen you to the song of the siren; when ungodly companions entreat you to frequent the haunts of vice, he speaks in warning tones and pleads with you not to make your life a failure. He urges you to do that which is right regardless of consequences. His appeal is always in defence of God and man, and on the side of progress and truth. His voice is heard in the emphatic declaration of Luther when asked to recant, "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen!" It is heard again in the words of Carlyle, "Do what is right, even if you have to go to the devil." This divine master gives satisfaction in doing good. Follow the teachings of Christ, keep the truth of God as a holy treasure in your heart, seek the good of men, and he will always speak kindly and encourage you. It is the design of the Christian religion to bring us under the dominion of an enlightened conscience. Christ is the ideal of the Christian conscience. His blood cleanses

and purifies, his teachings ennable, his life inspires, and his power saves.

Place your conscience under the educating influences of the Bible. In contact with Christ you will be transformed into newness of life. Drink in His spirit, and you will be exalted ; live with Him in the secret of His presence, and you will grow like Him in beauty and strength. Obey your conscience ; seek its enlightenment by the study of divine truth and prayer ; test all things by the conscience of Christ and Paul ; and then obey the Master in the soul with a faith that falters not at any danger, and the light of God will illumine your heart and life and give you peace and joy. Surrender your all to God and serve Him faithfully. Listen always to the inward master saying to you, "Man, remember thou art mortal." Say to your heart, not only "I ought to do right" and "I must do right," but also, "I will do right," and then you will enter the land of freedom, and through Christ you will become a free man. Serve Christ regardless of consequences, and you cannot fail, for the right shall win in eternity, where all accounts are settled and every man receives his due.

THE INFINITE OUTCOME.

“ Man stands as in the centre of Nature ; his fraction of Time encircled by Eternity ; his handbreadth of Space encircled by Infinitude.”—*Carlyle*.

“ A man is the whole encyclopædia of facts. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn, and Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America, lie folded already in the first man.”—*Emerson*.

“ I have thought some of Nature’s journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.”—*Shakespeare*.

“ Man is of soul and body, formed for deeds
Of high resolve, on fancy’s boldest wing.”
—*Shelley*.

“ Men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.”
—*Tennyson*.

“ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion.”—*Gen. 1 : 26*.

THE worth of a man depends upon his estimate of life, and the attitude he bears toward his Maker. You cannot value a man in pounds and shillings, in dollars and cents. Some men have a low contempt of life, and accordingly live as if they were children of earth and time,

spending their years in trifles, pursuing wealth or happiness, which are not the true objects of existence; immortals building castles on the sand, heaven-born beings raking mud in the streets of earth in quest of gold, children of God keeping company with the devil. A royal few hold life at a high estimate, and count themselves happier in living as immortals with Lazarus in his rags, than as mortals with Dives in his purple and fine linen. We magnify the present by thinking upon it continually, and extinguish eternity by never reflecting upon it. Man is made for God, and is only happy in Him, and yet he is opposed to Him. How much is a man worth? Let a human soul be put up for auction, and the angels of heaven and hell assembled as the bidders. One angel offers for this immortal the British Empire, but that is too low a price; another offers Europe and the Western continent, but that is not enough; a third bids the world—the land and seas, and stars—but still that will not purchase this human soul. How much are you worth? Let God answer.

What is man? He is a word of God—the expression of the Infinite. He is the miracle of the universe, the mystery of the ages, and a son of the Highest. Look at his body, with its wonderful mechanism, so intricate in its consti-

tution and so thoroughly adapted to all climes and circumstances, that Galen was converted from atheism by examining a human skeleton. His hand bears evidences of his divine origin, his godlike attitude as seen in the erect body, raises him above all creatures ; his garment of flesh is the temple of the universe, a statue moulded in His own image by the Master Moulder, the most wonderful organization that has come from the hand of God. The undevout physiologist is mad. Look at his brain—his reasoning faculties, his memory and imagination—which links the past and present, is indifferent to time and space, travels faster than the lightning's flash, visiting China and Africa in a moment, and is capable of soaring with Milton through untravelled realms and roaming with Danté through regions of infernal woe. Enumerate the inventions and discoveries, the arts and sciences, the external evidences of civilization, and the eternal impressions made upon man's inner nature by the power of sympathy, and the largeness and strength of ideas, and note all these as the product of the human intellect. Examine the masterpieces of the world's greatest painters and sculptors, the poems which have lived for centuries, the institutions which have moulded the life of nations, and the systems of philosophy and religion

which have governed the minds and hearts of people for ages, and mark these products of the human mind. Look at his soul, with its strong passions of love and hate, its inarticulate moanings after the Infinite, possessing earth, yet destined for heaven, its stately ruins as of a fair temple wherein God Himself found a habitation —and tell me, is not man the breath of the Highest, the glory of the universe, the great depository and guardian of truth, and does he not carry in his capacious mind the geometry of the city of God, and in his soul a kingdom for which heaven and hell contend ?

Estimate the value of one man by the provisions which have been made for his sustenance in the abundant gifts of nature and providence, the whole earth waiting upon him and pouring forth her treasures at his feet. His life is not dependent upon his own will, else a single fear or doubt might disarrange the entire machinery and he would cease to exist. Count his worth by the wisdom and care of God, who sleeps not, but guards him with the love of a mother. Reckon his greatness by the empire which has been placed in his keeping, and his eternal destiny, and then tell me how much he is worth when you have gazed upon Calvary as the expression of the love of God, and the price of the redemption of man, The material

world is too small a price to purchase a son of God.

Man is the last and noblest of created things. All are creatures of God, but he is a son. All are possessed of life, but he had breathed into him the breath of the Infinite. He is the central figure in the story of the earth's beginning, and all things borrow their worth and significance as they are related to him. He is the finest specimen of the handicraft of the Almighty. He is the only created thing made in the image of God. He was made a little lower than the angels, but by redemption is exalted more than they. When Adam was called into existence the angels must have beheld him with delightful surprise, and the devils must have carried the news of the advent of the august stranger on earth to the courts of hell with forebodings of defeat. He was created for the purpose of satisfying the love of God, and for companionship with Him. He was not made for himself, nor for his friends, nor for the angels, but for God. Man was made for dominion, the master of created things, the lord of the earth. The world is the cradle in which he is nursed, and his workshop for the employment of all his powers. It is not a playhouse where he may eat and drink, superintend the moving figures as toys, and creep with worms; but a

temple, where he is to enjoy visions of God and soar with the angels.

The Creator, in forming the earth, allowed it to pass through successive changes, as geology has shown us, and created various types of animals which passed away, and permitted the sun to hide its heat in the vast beds of coal, with man as the end of all animal and vegetable creation. Man was continually in His thoughts in the making of the world. The Divine Thinker, according to our human conception, had an infinite plan of the universe, as we see it expressed in the order and development of the world. His vast conceptions dazzle us with their magnificence and minuteness. He works in large designs and according to small patterns begotten in eternity. With one hand he forms a ring of one hundred thousand miles in diameter to revolve around a planet, and with the other the claw of a foot of an insect that can only be seen by the aid of a microscope. The plan of the world is seen in its regular movements—the seasons never fail, the tides follow His direction. The earth is perfectly adapted to the wants of animals and man. Vegetable productions are supplied necessary for their subsistence, and the crust of the earth has the exact degree of consistence for all purposes. Were it harder than it now is it could not be

cultivated, and were it softer it would be as quagmire, insufficient to support us. The laws of nature are not the servants of fate, but modes of God's action. The leaf, the blade of grass, the star, the fossil, are expressions of the thought of the Eternal Maker.

Man has a place in the divine plan. The human race is the chief attraction for Him who made all things. All nature was prepared for it, and remains its servant ; speech was formed for it, and languages developed by it ; laws are for its protection, and institutions for its improvement. The progress of the race is the result of the intelligent use of the gifts of the Almighty. The growth and movements of population, the equalization of the birth of the sexes, which is the Divine protest against polygamy, the continual preservation of the race, the revelation of the Divine will, and the gift of Christ for the redemption of man are evidences of the wisdom, care and love of God. He implanted in the hearts of men a desire for companionship and co-operation, laying the foundations of the family, the home and social order. He gathered and set the solitary in families, and society is seen as a part of the plan of God. The first thought of your Heavenly Father about you was : "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have

dominion." The Infinite One created worlds and packed them full of power, and then said, let us make a king that shall have dominion. Man, in the image of God, is the key-note of his being. No poetry, or philosophy, or the dream of optimists ever struck this note—it is revelation. Man is the child of God and should be like his Father. Enough remains in the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man to show that it was made in the Divine image, and more than enough of vicious deformity to warn us of the descent from his original condition. Man was made for dominion. God is King of the universe, and the child should be like his Father. The great world, as an empire with all its powers and possibilities, was intended for the empire of man, and God has invited him to sit upon His throne and rule. He was the king of the earth, the master of the world. Every excellent quality exhibited among men is an imperfect exhibition of what belongs to each perfect man. The greatness of the painter and poet, of the artist and sculptor is the heritage of each obedient son of God.

There is a Divine plan in your life. As a father has a purpose in his mind for his son, without interfering with the will of the boy, and the thought and plan may never be wrought out in the life because of waywardness and the

crossing of the will of the son with the will of the father ; so God has a holy purpose and plan for your life, which is for your advancement, and yet you may cross that plan, and the intention of God may never be carried out because of your sin. How often human plans fail and hopes are blighted by the higher plan of Divine mercy and love. We complain on account of this holy interference, the stroke has been severe, the burden has been heavy, yet in the future, when we have scanned the course of events, we have been led to say : "He doeth all things well." You grumble because you do not understand the purpose of God, but if finite reason could grasp it, then no longer would it be infinite and of God. A child knows not the meaning of the father's plans concerning him, for if he did, the child would be a man, or the father would be a child ; and so long as God is infinite, the finite cannot understand His ways. We can, however, trust in His justice and love, knowing that He cannot do wrong, and will never cause unnecessary pain. The discoverer of new worlds is working out his own plan, which is a part of the great plan of the Eternal One. Our work is but a segment in the sphere of God's eternal work. God has a plan for your life in this world.

The divine law of progress as seen in nature,

revelation and human experience is the unfolding of the plan of God. The history of the world and of the human race is a story of development. There have been stages of retrogression in the life of nations, but even these have been used by God to minister to the progress of the race. Time is the great historian which marks the upward footsteps of man. It is the greatest of innovators and the greatest of improvers. Mark the march of mind from a savage condition, with its narrow ideas, along the path of civilization until it culminates in personal greatness and evolves a Shakespeare and a Newton, and expresses itself in the culture of a class or a nation. But it rests not there, for the pillars of Hercules mark not its boundaries, *plus ultra* is its prophecy; *more beyond* is the thought of God in the development of the mind. The annals of the nations reveal the progress of society, in the increase of wealth and the development of the arts of life, despite the corruption of courtiers and the avarice of rulers. Political history is a record of action and reaction which end in one direction, the progress of the world. The history of religious doctrine is a story of development, from the childhood of the race until the present time. The spiritual history of the world is a record of progress, not without periods of retrogression,

which seem to be necessary for full manhood. God is working out His plan, and were we able to occupy for a moment an infinite height, so as to grasp the whole, we should see unity of purpose, stone upon stone hewn and polished, fitted and put in its own place, producing harmony, strength and beauty, as an eternal palace in process of building by the Omnipotent Architect and Builder.

When God made Adam the work of creation was completed, and the work of development begun. Man is still in the process of making, character building is still going on, and God and man are working together in fitting the human child for earth and heaven. The child plays with toys, the man works with tools. Our ancestors were satisfied with huts, we must have mansions, and the men of the future will not be satisfied with less than castles and palaces. The mind is growing, our wants are increasing, and we shall never be satisfied with less than eternal habitations, for our aspirations are yearnings after the Infinite. Every step higher in climbing and cutting our names in the rock, means another step, and still another, until we reach the top. God has not finished His work in the making of man, and He will not cease until the last man stands upon the shores of time and waves his last farewell.

Our Eternal Father has made provision for the working out of the plan of your life. Your body is an engine which supplies force for the intellectual and spiritual machine, and fuel must be supplied to generate the force and the engine must be kept in continual repair. In His wisdom God has made the soil capable of bringing forth nourishment; the fields join hands with the roots and grains; the trees shed their leaves and drop their fruits; the sea yields its inhabitants for food for man; the forests become martyrs, sacrificing their finest trees to warm and house him; the beds of coal are at his service; the animals give their wool and hides to clothe him and their flesh to sustain him; the winds purify the atmosphere obedient to the moon and tides; the sun and electricity make the coldest days pleasant and the darkest nights suitable for labor. All Nature waits upon him to maintain the body in health and cure it when weak or disabled. The wealth of the material universe is not solely for the satisfying of hunger or the enrichment of individuals, but for the making of men. But man shall not live by bread alone; he is more than animal; he is a social being, and must live beyond himself; he is made for dominion and fellowship, and he only lives as he becomes extensive. Power for the social nature of man is his need, and it is this which God supplies. To

bring forth all that lies in each man he must keep company with the greatest souls that have ever lived. But man has an intellect which cannot exist on material things. The mind seeks after knowledge, and is capable of recognizing and grasping it, so God has made provision for his intellectual nature by granting him truth, which is a revelation of Himself. Truth is the language which God uses for expressing His thoughts, and by its possession men are enriched and brought into harmony with the mind of God. But man is a moral being, and he requires for his moral nature the food which will suit him, and this is found in the relation of his will to the laws of God. Righteousness is God's provision for our moral nature. The laws of God are just and they are true, not only because God is their author and they are revealed to us by Him, but also because they are in agreement with the nature of man. The laws of God, which are the expression of His will, is His provision for the moral nature of man. But man has an æsthetic nature, and not only to satisfy this human yearning for harmony in sound and color, as seen in the flowers, in the dress of birds, in painting, or in agreeable forms of sculpture and architecture, and heard in music; but to enoble and stimulate him, making him conscious of his high origin and dignity as a son of God,

there has been given him beauty as a provision for his aesthetic nature, and beauty is the expression of the holy life of God Himself. But man has a spiritual life, and the provisions already mentioned relate to his human life, as it is turned toward the world and men. Of the spiritual life as it relates to the life of God, provision has been made for its sustenance by love, as seen in Jesus Christ. Love is life, and the true spiritual forces of life are found in Christ. Love, as embodied in Christ, is provided for man's spiritual nature. But man is a child of eternity, with an immortal nature. He is made in the likeness and image of God, and is imperishable. The destruction of a son of the Highest would register the death of God. This life is too short for the unfolding of man's nature. Man is blest with a noble discontent. The aspirations of the soul are prophecies of an immortal destiny. Death is the isthmus between time and eternity. God has made provision for the eternal nature of man by giving him immortality, which is perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ.

Seeing that God has made so great provision for your life, how great ought you to be. As parents have high ideals and large expectations for their sons, so God has higher ideals for His children than earthly parents or themselves. He invites you to rise to the greatness of His

thoughts concerning you. He has given you a kingdom in which you are to rule. His ambition for you is higher than you can ever have for yourself. Think of the intention of your Father to make you like Himself, to exalt you to be a ruler, not of one city, but of ten cities. He made you for dominion and He wishes you to inherit your possessions. The idea which God has concerning you may be seen by that fondness for empire which you sometimes feel, and which can only be realized by working out the ideal life. To the majority of mankind life is simply gratification, each one seeking to gratify his ruling propensity. The idea of life presented in Scripture consists in completeness of being. It is the fulfilment of God's purpose in us and by us, and when this thought predominates, life is felt to be a definite mission, with its beginning in regeneration and its continuance in a renewed and redeemed being consecrated to the service of God. Ideal manhood is seen in the life of Christ. He is God's idea of what a man should be on earth. Lest we might fail to keep before us the picture of the true life, He sent Christ, saying, "This is the picture of manhood." Christ places Himself by our side and shows us the perfect life on earth. He is the only man we can love without disappointment and worship

without idolatry. His teachings are grander than the revelations of nature or of human philosophies. In all the history of humanity His life is without a parallel for purity, nobleness and aspiration. In the ideal Book there are various types of manhood, that none may be discouraged, and each may find a model for the moulding of character, and all may find it in Christ. This is the divine side in working out the plan of your life.

But there is a human side in working out the plan of God. What are you doing with God's plan? Mighty ideals are necessary to great achievements. Ideals are necessary to progress. Aspiration is the natural condition of men. An emergency draws out the powers of man. The highest ideals are born in the lofty sphere of contemplation and communion with God. As God is always dealing with men on the basis of their secret choices, the great question for you to answer is, "What is the great choice of your life?" Anastasius, the Roman emperor, was greeted by the populace in a sentence which revealed his character, "Reign as you have lived!" The supreme question for you to answer is, "How shall I live?" It is your duty to live in accordance with the plan of God. The use of life is to plant thought and trans-

form it into an action. Your work is to raise the souls of citizens, not the roofs of houses, for man is more than a house. The use of studies is not to place you upon a tower to look down upon men, nor in a fortress to resist them, nor in a factory for gain, but to furnish your mind and heart as a rich treasury of noble thoughts for the unfolding and ennoblement of life. A great life is not made by trying to do great things, but by doing common things with a lofty spirit for the sake of God and men. The eternal sky full of light and truth soars over our heads, and in God's world, under the arch of heaven, we are called to do our simple duty. Your duty in the world is to do the will of God, which is the life and happiness of all men. Righteousness is the duty of all men. Love God and obey him. Live while you live. You can never come to God's idea of what you should be, except by being in His likeness ; and you can never reach the great throne of empire in this world without being what God meant you to be.

Be a master ; be a king. Seek not happiness, for that is not the chief end of life ; but seek dominion. Glorify God by being good and doing good. Character is the chief thing. The root of a triumphant life lies in a holy pur-

pose. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." To glorify life is to glorify God, and to enjoy the presence and work of God is to enjoy God here and hereafter. "My lord, I fear you are not fulfilling the end of your life," said the Rev. Dr. McCosh to Lord Dufferin as they were riding in the Clandeboye estate. "What do you mean?" said the nobleman, imperiously. "I mean that you have talents and accomplishments. You have great influence, both in your descent and your property, and something good and great is expected of you." "But what do you expect me to do?" said his lordship. "I expect you to devote yourself to statesmanship." "Do you think that I have the talent for this work?" said Dufferin, thoughtfully and earnestly. The clergyman replied that he did. Not long afterwards Lord Dufferin was deep in political matters, and his public career and brilliant service may have been directed by this short conversation, as a word in season.

What shall be the infinite outcome in eternity? If God can find any one who has been faithful over a few things, He will make him a ruler over many things. Any one who has rightly improved a pound will be given authority over ten cities. When you have done your work

with a noble and faithful spirit, God will at last say to you, "Take thou ten cities for a little fidelity, and for being faithful over the least have thou rulership over that which is most." Begin life again at the starting point by a return to God, giving Him His own, and being supremely loyal to Christ. Work out in your life the purpose of God, that you may be restored to the divine image. Keep step with Him, and when you realize that you are in league with Him you will find that you are not so much fighting for Him as He is fighting for you, and then you will be able to stand in any path of life, and with a vision broader than Leonidas, who not only saw the Pass of Thermopylæ and the Persians in front, but the city of Athens and the Acropolis, with the gods looking on, you will see the eternal throne, and peer into infinity, and become greater than time itself. Bring all your life into harmony with your legitimate position, to have dominion, to be a king over nature and life. The jewel that God and the angels are looking for on earth is character. God has called you for dominion. You are to be a man with a resolute aim, not a mollusk with aimless reverie; you are to be a man with vitality, not dead matter only known as *avoirdupois*. It is your preroga-

tive to be anointed with the oil of God, that you may wrestle on earth and reign in heaven. Begin life now in earnest, standing on the prow of your vessel, seeing God only, and sail onward toward new lands of truth and beauty that you may win them for God, and become a king, for you were made for dominion, and nothing short of mastery should satisfy a son of the Eternal.

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